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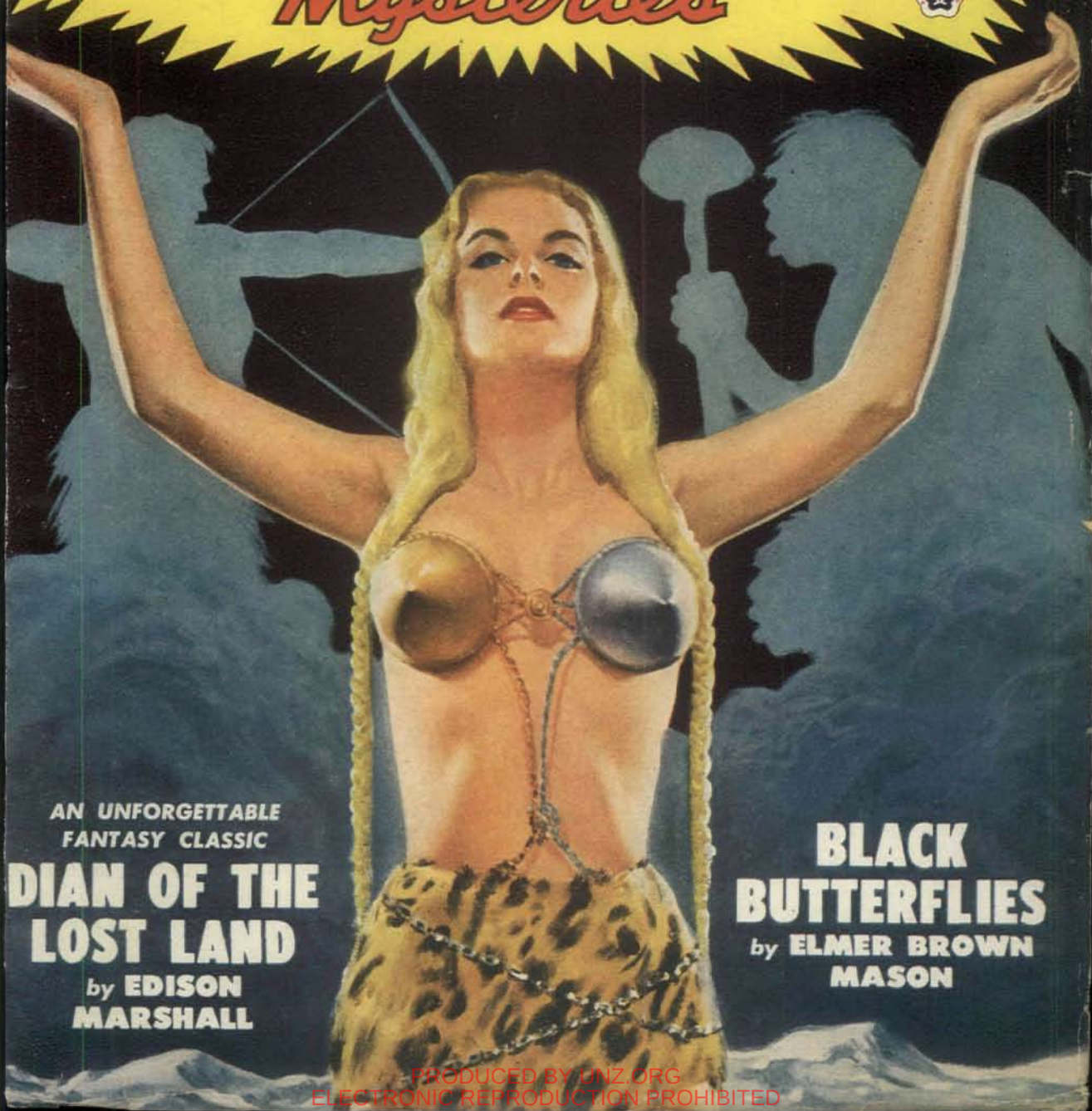

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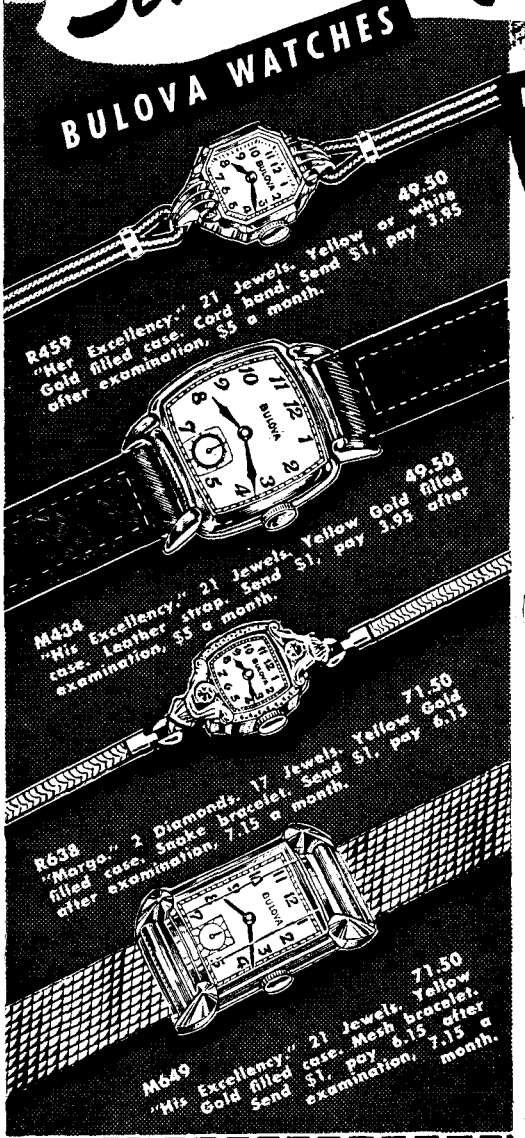

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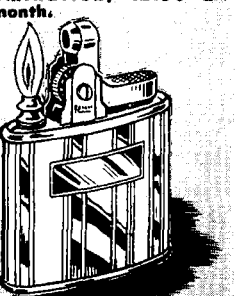

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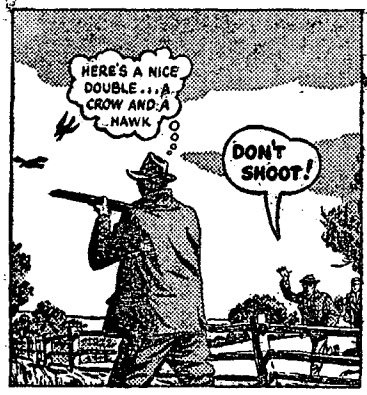

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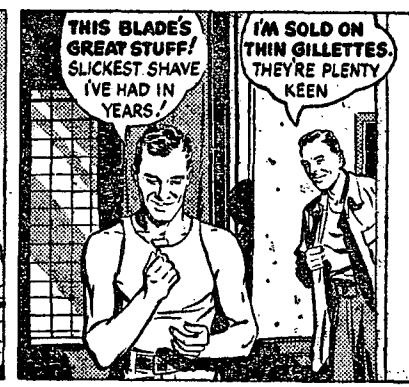

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VOL. 10 APRIL, 1949 No. 4

Book-Length Novel

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A strange, lost people . . . a race that Time forgot . . . a man who dared to seek it in the dawn of history to find a love that was stronger than the centuries. . . .

Novelette

Black Butterflies — **Elmer Brown Mason** — 88

The way was strewn with the dead who had dared seek out the secrets of those jungle depths . . . but the lure was gold at safari's end, and the priceless wings of the sable butterfly no man had ever caught. . . .

The Readers' Viewpoint — 6

Masters of Fantasy — **Neil Austin** — 87

John Taine—Reaper of the Rainbow

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Cover by Lawrence. Inside illustrations by Finlay.

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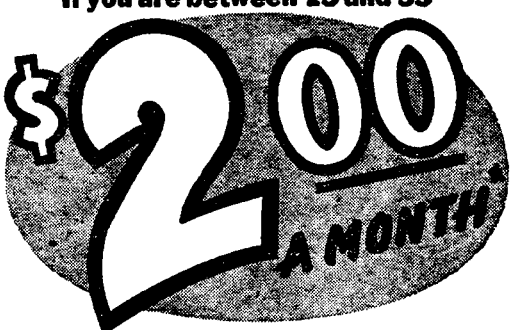

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The Readers' Viewpoint

Address comments to the Letter Editor, Famous Fantastic Mysteries, All-Fiction Field, Inc., 205 E. 42nd St., New York 17, New York.

"NORDENHOLT'S MILLION" FINE

Connington's novel was excellent. Thanks, F.F.M., for another highly enjoyable reading session.

I particularly liked the author's calm and credible reporting of a theme which could become all too easily bogged down with sensationalism. The story is implausible from more than one standpoint, but his meticulous care for the small things made for a realistic-sounding yarn.

Connington's picture of the dying London is splendid fantasy; both grotesque and eerily fascinating.

And speaking of London, it's a great pleasure to hear that we'll be seeing more of the author of the same name. Needless to say, Jack London is a favourite with me. Obtain rights for another story like "The Star Rover", and you'll be doing the readers a great favour.

Let's see more of Haggard, too.

DON HUTCHISON.
7 Tacoma Ave.,
Toronto 5, Ontario, Canada.

THE VOICE FROM THE ABYSS

At first glance, your December cover seemed to promise another of those wonderful (???) end of the world things in which either somebody bats somebody else over the head with an A bomb and everybody dies in happy bursts of Atomic agony or the insects decide to take over and turn all of suffering humanity out into the wilderness.

But I was in for a pleasant surprise. True, "Nordenholt's Million", had an end of the world theme, but given a new twist and handled in such a thoroughly masterful manner and containing lo—and behold—praise be to Allah and whoopee—a love angle that added to the story instead of subtracting from it.

The scenes of dying London were, to put it mildly, terrific, with all the weird and powerful

(Continued on page 116)

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DIAN OF THE LOST LAND

CHAPTER I

MIDNIGHT ERRAND

WHEN Doctor Adam Weismann felt discouraged, the view from his window cheered him. Sydney's water-front is imposing at all times; now the southern summer had lent it a dreamy beauty peculiarly Australian. For twelve miles up the coast the wharf lights sparkled and glowed; new stars, white, warm, and near, not cold and remote like his own Dakota stars, glimmered in the hushed waters of the bay. Hundreds of ships lay sleeping in the docks or drowsed at anchor.

Adam felt queerly about ships. The big liners from San Francisco and London merely made him homesick, but the little ships, the battered freighters and disreputable tramps that came and departed, God knows where, wakened in him an extraordinary delight. True, there was bitter

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The high-held lamps added a ritualistic air to the visitation, inciting awe rather than blind panic.

By Edison Marshall

mixed with the sweet, as in all life's higher moods. What was back of it he did not know—it seemed to be a vague yearning which his scientific mind could not dissect or dispel. He wondered uneasily whether he himself had sailed in too well-traveled ocean lanes, and had lost some splendid fulfilment beyond the sky-line.

Yet he had no cause to complain. He had gone far, for one of his years. His patients found it hard to believe that a man so young, scarcely thirty, with a lean youthful face and the lithe hard body of a football star, could hold honorary degrees from two universities and be the foremost authority on an obscure Oriental disease.

He had won these distinctions fairly. In his own limited field he stood alone; except for him the new malady still would have remained beyond the light of science. He had isolated its bacillus, and although he had named it Coral Fever—partly because of one of its symptoms but principally because the first cases were discovered in Samarai, at the gate of the Coral Sea—his fellow doctors spoke of it as

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"Weismann's disease." True, Coral Fever was not yet a menace to society. Cases of it were extremely rare, and were but slightly infectious. However, his discoveries were considered important enough to win him not only honors, but some financial backing to continue his study.

Scattered cases of the disease had appeared among Sydney longshoremen, and this fact accounted for Adam's presence in the city. He had engaged rooms on the waterfront, close as possible to his patients, and was already well liked and respected in Port Jackson's underworld. Yet perhaps this last was not altogether due to his scientific attainments. The dive-keepers and drug-smugglers knew little of bacteriology. They did, however, know that the young scientist was a "man's man," that he could handle his sick stevedores like babies, and that his blond head towered above even the lean mariners from Christiania and Stavanger.

Tonight he was spending a typical lonely evening. For an hour he watched the moonlit harbor, then turned on his radio to hear the latest reports from Byrd's first Antarctic expedition, less than three thousand miles distant. At last he picked up a book—Osborn's "Men of the Old Stone Age"—and settled himself for an hour's quiet reading. His mind was relaxed, but his body kept an arresting look of wild animal vigilance, even when slouched in his chair. It suggested a sleepy lion, tawny, lazy, but instinct with vigor, youth, and power.

Less and less he seemed the scientist; more and more the adventurer exiled from his wilderness. One might sense a mysterious symbolism even in his physical features. He was of German descent, and his hair was yellow as a plainsman's, the exact color of new gold from the gravel of nameless rivers. His blue eyes had the shade and shine and depth which home-bound dreamers picture in uncharted polar seas.

An hour before midnight there came a timid knock on his door. When he answered, a Danish sailor stepped into the room.

Adam's eyes kindled. His occasional contacts with such men comprised the bright spots of his studious life. The Dane was a man to notice twice even in the polyglot caravansary which is Sydney's waterfront. He was a superb specimen; save for his tawny hair and eyebrows, all six feet of him was white as milk.

"I'm Lars Kristenson, captain of de *Penguin,*" the Dane began in labored English. "Can you come wit' me to see a sick man?"

"Why don't you go to one of the regular doctors? I don't take general practice. I do only special work."

"But we coom all de way from Wellington yust to see you. No odder doctor can fix him. His mouth and lips dey turn pink."

Adam knew what this meant. There is only one disease that tints the mucous membrane of the mouth and throat a bright coral pink. "Is the man carrying fever?"

"He got hunner and t'ree. He not eat for t'ree days."

Adam nodded grimly. The symptoms tallied only too well. At once he put on his hat and followed the Dane into the street.

It was a fact that he felt not the slightest uneasiness about this midnight errand. In the first place, it is a doctor's duty and province to go on unknown missions at all hours. In the second place, Adam's scientific interest in the case put him off guard. Finally, and most significant, he was not naturally a timid or a nervous man. His imagination was active enough, but it conjured up forms of beauty rather than bugbears of terror. He had that sense of security, often mistaken and treacherous, which is the psychological outgrowth of great height and powerful physique. He felt perfectly able to take care of himself and never stopped to think that his superb physical strength would avail him nothing against a knife concealed in the Dane's armpit, or the black-jack of a thug waiting in an alley.

But his guide led him safely to a nearby wharf and down the gang-plank onto the deck of a ship.

For one brief moment Adam paused and looked about him.

He was not in the least alarmed, in fact rather pleased, to find himself aboard one of the vagabond ships seen from his window. This was a vessel of perhaps four hundred tons, with steam and auxiliary sails and the lines of an ice-breaker. As yet there was no way to guess her nationality; her flag was not in evidence, and her crew seemed to be a typical mixture of Scandinavians, English and Germans such as sail most all ships on the seven seas. The officer on the deck seemed to be a Finn—at least he had the immense shoulders and undersized legs of the skiff-bred men of Helsingfors—and there was an immense Negro, probably a steward or ship's cook, standing by the rail just forward of the cabin.

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ADAM'S eye roved to what seemed a shapeless gray shadow on the after deck. Under close scrutiny it evolved into a seaplane. He was frankly mystified. Such a vehicle might readily appear on the manifest of an ocean liner, but it seemed singular, to say the least, on the deck of a small tramp steamer. But before he could begin to guess its significance, his attention was directed to a tall man who came out of the cabin to greet him.

The thought occurred to Adam that the sailors of this little ship seemed to run large. Six foot men are not common—actually they appear not oftener than one in a hundred—yet he had seen four of them in practically four seconds. The Dane, the Negro, and the Finn were fully six feet, and this giant in the doorway was at least two inches taller, the equal of Adam himself. The latter wondered with some amusement if this were mere chance, or whether superb stature was a qualification for membership in the crew, anent the Doones of Bagworthy and the Potsdam guard of King Frederick William I of Prussia.

As the man emerged into the deck light, Adam eyed him in astonishment. He did not in the least conform to the usual deep-water type. Physically he was fit—supple, so lean that he looked emaciated, and probably hard as steel cable—but his deep-set eyes, peering through pince-nez, his bulging forehead, and certain indescribable thought-lines over his brows and around his eyes marked him as a brain-worker rather than a man of his hands. His powdered-gray hair, black mustache and small beard had not received their careful trimming in a water-front barber shop, nor had his garments come from a cut-rate clothing store frequented by seamen. He was a sallow-skinned, rather cold-looking individual, about forty-five years old, with the sign of the Slav in his round head and cast of features.

There were further signs in his speech. He spoke well, but with an accent recalling the guttural languages of the Danube countries. "Is this Doctor Weismann?"

"Yes, sir—"

"I was told I would find you here, but I was afraid I would have to pursue you all the way to Samarai and your more distant seats of operation. I am Karl Belgrade."

Adam breathed deeply. "Karl Belgrade the ethnologist—the anthropologist?"

"Of course."

"You are a long way from your usual seats of operation yourself, professor. The last time I heard of you—and I've been hearing of you, off and on, ever since I started to school—you were in Patagonia, excavating burial grounds."

"Permit me to say that your own work, with Coral Fever, is quite well known too." Belgrade spoke in a patronizing tone, but Adam knew by hearsay some of the great Slav's peculiarities, and took no offense. "So we have brought the *Penguin* all the way from Wellington to see you."

"The *Penguin*?" A vague memory flitted across Adam's brain. "Haven't I heard of her?"

"Possibly, if you have kept up with polar exploration. She was famous at one time, as the flag-ship of the ill-fated Gilbert Expedition to the Antarctic Continent, in 1908."

"I remember reading about her, in Gilbert's diary. But it seems to me she was lost, with all hands."

"So the world thinks. Really she was abandoned on the ice. But she came to life—I'll tell you the whole story later. Now, will you come and see the sick man?"

Adam followed Professor Belgrade into a small stateroom forward of the cabin. Lying on the cot was an elderly man in the throes of fever.

Adam did not have to look twice at the emaciated, pink-lipped face to recognize Coral Fever. He had expected nothing else, after hearing the Dane's description of the symptoms. And even as his pity went out to the man, he was ashamed to find a certain relish in the situation. It was, from a scientist's viewpoint, a beautiful case. Adam had never seen the disease take hold of a man of such advanced years. It was a great opportunity for study.

He began to give his patient a general examination. With his stethoscope he tested the heart and lungs; he took the blood pressure and the pulse. And now, for the first time, he took an interest in the sick man not as a case, but as an individual.

A strange, lost people . . . a race that Time forgot . . . a man who dared to seek into the dawn of history to find a love that was stronger than the centuries. . . .

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He could not remember when he had looked upon a face quite like this.

Suddenly it occurred to him that the man might not be as old as he appeared. His hair was white, his face deeply lined and wrinkled, but the texture and resiliency of his skin were that of a man in early middle-age. Could it be that this pitiable wreck of humankind was only forty-five or fifty years old? And now Adam noticed that he was curiously marked. The top of one ear was missing, and three fingers were gone from his right hand. To complete the sorry picture, one eye was decidedly off center, giving him a sinister appearance which even a cold-blooded doctor, inured to unpleasant sights, found hard to ignore.

The crossed eye was probably a congenital defect, but his other disfigurements were plainly the result of accident and disease. Indeed, Adam found himself thinking that what was now a broken, battered wreck was at one time a goodly vessel. The wasted frame was once powerfully muscled, the mutilated right hand strong as a bear's.

He turned to Belgrade, waiting impatiently beside the door. "This man looks as if he's been through the devil. If I'm not mistaken the fingers and ear were frozen off."

"Yes, but that is not what you came to determine." Belgrade spoke with ill-concealed annoyance.

"I determined that he had Coral Fever from the officer's description. Obviously he must be taken to shore and placed under my care."

BELGRADE now beckoned the doctor into the passageway. "How sick is he, Weismann? I understand that Coral Fever is almost invariably fatal, but I want to know just how long can he last."

The Slav spoke eagerly, and his eyes had an odd shine. Adam felt a sudden, inexplicable distaste for him and his affairs. "He's in the last stage of the infection. Even if his general condition were good, he'd go out within a year. As it is, it is a matter of weeks."

"Be definite, doctor, if you can." Belgrade rubbed his lean, wiry hands. "How many weeks?"

"That depends entirely on the care he receives. With proper care—the right food and treatment—he may live from four to eight weeks. Otherwise a week or two will see the finish."

"A week or two! That won't help me at all. And you, doctor, are the only man who can keep him alive longer than that."

"That's probably true. You see, Coral Fever is a new disease, unknown until the present century. I am the only doctor who has gone into it thoroughly, and there's no standard technique for treating it. That is why he must be put ashore under my care."

"But, doctor—he can't be put ashore. I need him here, on the ship. I can't continue my expedition without him; he alone can guide me into the country I want to enter. So that means—you'll have to come with us."

He was wholly in earnest. His tone was determined, and there were tell-tale signs of excitement in his sallow countenance. "That's out of the question," Adam answered coldly. "I have my own work to do here."

"But you don't understand. I am offering you a wonderful opportunity. Your assistants can do your work here, and after all, it's a minor matter compared to this. Coral Fever! An obscure Oriental disease that may take off two score useless lives each year."

Adam began to bristle. "You don't seem to think that the life of that man in the cabin is altogether useless."

"I alone have made it useful. He is merely one of a particularly numerous species—of no more importance, actually, than one ant in a hill—and it is just a trick of Fate that his life has suddenly become so desperately important to science. Be reasonable, doctor. I grant that you have accomplished a good deal, but you won't miss two or three months, and on the other hand, you'll never have another chance like this. I am about to make the most sensational discovery in modern Ethnology. You can take my word, the word of one who has always been cautious in his statements, that the whole scientific world will be thunderstruck. And as my assistant, you will get more recognition at one stroke than in a lifetime's research into Coral Fever. New knowledge of vast importance will be given to the world."

Adam fought back his anger, and resolved to find out how far this strange scientist would go. "Do you mean you are offering me a partnership in the enterprise? That it will be called the Belgrade-Weismann expedition?"

"We can safely leave that for the future. In any event, I shall see that you get proper credit in my reports, and besides, you will have the satisfaction of helping

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me add to the world's store of knowledge."

"It is very tempting, of course. Just the same, I have my own work to do, and I can't go with you."

"Even though I assure you that the trip will not only be of great scientific and popular interest, but extremely venturesome and novel?"

"No, not even with that assurance."

"In other words, you definitely refuse to go, under any conditions?"

"Yes, I definitely refuse. If I am to treat the sick man, he must be put ashore."

"Then I will have to make other plans. Excuse me while I speak to the captain."

While Belgrade was making arrangements for moving the invalid—this seemed the most likely reason for his absence—Adam returned to the sick-room. He found the patient aroused from his stupor and sitting up in bed.

This seeming miracle did not surprise the doctor. Occasional bursts of strength are characteristic of Coral Fever. The professional zeal that flashed across his face was due solely to his desire to question the sick man before he sank again. But Adam paused when he saw the patient's eyes sunken and glittering. He could not talk dependably tonight. He was in that curious rational state which lies on the far side of delirium, a kind of fourth-dimension land which is stranger than delirium itself.

"My name's Hull," he said clearly. "I don't believe I know you."

"No wonder. I'm Doctor Weismann. You've never seen me before."

"No, but I've seen what no other civilized man has seen."

In his brief years of practise, Adam had listened to a great deal of delirious raving, and usually did not remember a word of it. But this man's quiet declaration, coming out of a clear sky, startled him profoundly. Every ounce of romance in his make-up was stirred, and he vaguely sensed that in some fashion he was being hurled headlong into adventure. He looked at Hull's face, and thought it entirely possible that those haunted eyes had beheld scenes hidden from all others.

"For instance, what?" Adam asked. He spoke casually, lest he should excite the patient into incoherent frenzy.

"I've seen men die on the ice, while I lived on. I've seen the Moss Country, lyin' under the range, sheltered from the cold south wind. I've seen the *Maun ig Mere.*"

"I don't know what that last means. What language is it?"

"It's a language no livin' Englishman has heard except me. The words mean the 'Cave of Death.' They'll put Belgrade in that cave, too, if he don't look out. As for me, I'll be rich, and get square with them at the same time. Gold and ivory and fur." He chuckled quietly. "There are women too. Plenty women, there, and not too bad looking, neither."

At this instant the conversation was interrupted by Belgrade's return. To Adam came a queer feeling, psychic and inexplicable, that himself and this Slav were somehow at odds, that what seemed a casual acquaintance was actually a far-reaching, vital enmity the potentiality of which was violence and death. But Adam's sophisticated mind refused to accept such a far-fetched idea. It seemed too absurd for credence. Belgrade, smiling and bright-eyed, was offering him a smoke. "I am always entertained by human beings," he said.

He spoke as if human beings were some odd kind of animals, exhibited for his amusement in a zoo.

"In what way?" Adam asked.

"I was thinking then of the typical Nordic's incorrigible love of violence. A Danish seaman—and he is typical of the blond North—hates to use his brain almost as much as one of your own countrymen, but give him a chance to thrash around and use his mucles, he is immediately enthusiastic. I shall no longer marvel at prominent military leaders. To incite men to fight is simply child's play. They'll accept any kind of a reason, no matter how far-fetched, and take any kind of a risk."

"What put that thought into your head?" Adam asked curiously.

"A conversation I just had with Lars, the Danish skipper whom I sent to bring you. It was merely incidental. With his help, I have made arrangements for the patient to be placed immediately under your care."

ADAM was greatly astonished at this easy victory. It did not accord with Belgrade's character. According to tales told by his colleagues, the great anthropologist was utterly ruthless and invincible, when the welfare of science was concerned. "At once, I hope. There is no time to be lost."

"Certainly at once."

A brief silence followed his words. To Adam it seemed electric, charged with suspense; he wondered what caused his imagination to play him such tricks. Then

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his attention was caught by a subdued rumble under his feet.

Belgrade smiled into his guest's eyes. His white teeth flashed through his black beard. "The engineer has put new bearings on the shaft," he explained. "I suppose he is trying them out."

Adam nodded. "Industrious fellow, to do his experimenting at this hour of night."

"It is all the same to a sailor. You probably know that the day is divided roughly into four hour periods. It is now Macdougal's time to stand watch."

This seemed an especially trivial conversation, and Adam resolved to end it. "It's *my* time to be in bed, getting some rest," he said. "When can the patient be moved?"

"Be moved, Doctor?"

Belgrade spoke lightly, almost impudently. Adam whirled toward him, to see the corners of his eyes crinkled with silent laughter. But whatever the joke was, Adam did not relish it. His straightforward nature had no sympathy for Slavic subtleties; besides, he felt he was being made light of. His face flushed and his eyes glistened.

But this was no time for heady anger. Unless he kept cool, he could not hear the vague warning of his instincts, now whispered in his brain, nor could he hope to grasp the facts of the situation in time to control them. Perhaps it was already too late. Belgrade's air of impudence implied that the affair, whatever it might be, was settled.

"I thought that you agreed that the patient was to be moved," Adam said coldly.

"I did agree to that. It is now being done."

"Please tell your men to take him to the Mercy Hospital near my quarters. Now I must be going."

Belgrade slapped his lean thigh, a report sharp and startling in the silent room. "Doctor Weismann, you can't imagine how amusing you are. I don't mean *you* particularly—I mean you downright, solemn fellows of German ancestry. Of course you must be going, but you just aren't aware of it."

"See here, Belgrade." Almost ready to fight, Adam leaned toward the slim, smiling professor. "I don't like your attitude. You may be the greatest anthropologist in the world, but I don't propose to be laughed at by you or anyone else. You seem to be deliberately making light of what I say."

"I beg your pardon, Weismann. But it *is* a diverting situation, as you will see in a moment."

Revelation came not in a moment, but instantly. The floor on which Adam stood began to tilt gently. He felt the motion, and with an oath, flung through the cabin door onto the deck. He almost collided with two men who were standing guard at the threshold—one of them Lars and the other the gigantic Negro—but they stepped back and did not interfere with him other than to flank him at each side. With starting eyes he looked toward the wharf.

The lights of Sydney were swaying, swinging, slowly sailing by. The whole city seemed a brightly lighted ship in slow, stately motion. Between the ship and the wharf lay a broad river of black water.

The *Penguin* stood out to sea.

ADAM WEISMANN'S able brain dwelt in a strong body. One had not developed at the expense of the other; no matter how long his day's work, he had always found time and energy for thorough physical exercise, especially archery. But no amount of bodily strength could avail him now unless he willed it so. It was simply a matter of temperament—whether or not he was naturally a man of his hands.

Were his prime impulses physical or mental? In a crisis did he rely on his body or his brain? The truth seemed to be that he was dual-natured. On a scientific problem he was deliberate, slow to draw conclusions, unemotional. But in a physical crisis he was no different from the longshoremen he lived among. If anything, he was too choleric and hasty. Behind his analytical mind there lay a labyrinth of instinct from which any violence might arise.

His big frame was like a coiled spring. It projected forward with a swiftness and power that disconcerted his two guards and moved the athletic scientist to admiration. Adam meant to leap overboard and swim for shore. The two hundred yard plunge through black cold held no terrors for him. His big arms would flail the water, his yellow head dive in and out like a seal's. Nothing slower than a bullet could catch him.

But Belgrade was taking no chances. He possessed a practical as well as a scientific mind, and a virile mastery of men and situations. Detailed instructions had been given to the two guards, and they were good men, well-disciplined. There were no

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guns or knives to lead to fatal accidents. Lars had already reported that the prisoner was unarmed—doubtless he had his way of arriving at this fact—and the issue was a simple one of brawn. As Adam sprang for the rail, the big Negro shot through the air and tackled him, football fashion, about the knees.

This is a particularly effective act. Many rough and tumble fighters use it to open an attack. Instantly Lars was on top of him, pinning his arms back.

Adam was stunned by the fall, but there was strife in him yet. Furious at the indignity that had been put upon him, his first impulse was to let himself go, to fight to the finish, to thresh, gouge, bite, and kick with all the brute force of which his double-barreled make-up was capable, to do all the damage he could before he was crushed.

But there were three against one, and if he fought on, they would probably reduce him to a helpless pulp. They meant business, these three strange confederates. And helplessness, in this hour, he could not afford. Later he might see a chance to retaliate; then he would need his full powers of body and mind. He let Lars pinion his arms.

Meanwhile, another course had occurred to him. Instead of swearing huskily at his captors, he might raise his voice and call for help. The cry would carry easily to the wharves beyond.

But at once he rejected the idea. He knew if he tried to call, he would be instantly gagged; the other man would thrust his fist into the yelling mouth. Besides, one lone yell drifting in from a departing ship would have no meaning to a casual lounger on the dock. He would listen and wonder, and perhaps tell the tale in a bar-room, but would not take the slightest intelligent action. Possibly the cry would not be heard at all, this time of night.

If there was another force working to silence him—the strong force of pride—he was not aware of it. Yet such folly would not be beyond credence in men of Adam's stamp. A romantic Teuton, he might feel an unbearable indignity in pitifully yelling into the night for help. He did not want to give Belgrade this much satisfaction.

They helped him to his feet, shoved him into the captain's cabin, and closed the door. Belgrade, who up to this time had not laid hands on the prisoner, drew up a chair. "Sit down Weismann," he ordered bluntly. "Don't make any more trouble about something that cannot be helped."

Adam did not obey, but backed against the wall, his eyes luminous. "I want to know the meaning of this outrage."

"I admit it's an unpleasant business. If you had agreed to go with us, it could have been avoided. As it is, I had to use high-handed methods on you. I justify them in the name of science."

"Explain that to the authorities. You'll either put me on shore at once, or have a gunboat on your trail in twenty-four hours."

"Nothing of the kind. A wireless message will go out from the ship tonight, explaining to the hospital that you were suddenly called away. Now let's talk it over sensibly. If you sit down, I can dismiss these two guards."

Adam nodded—showing that he was checkmated—and slipped into a chair. Belgrade gave whispered instructions to Lars, and sat down opposite. Adam's hand shook, but he managed to light the cigarette Belgrade offered; the Negro, obviously Belgrade's servant, poured him a drink. In the breathing spell, Adam's eyes roamed about the room. It was originally the captain's cabin, but had been turned over to the distinguished passenger. The comfortable, dignified, masculine furnishings, the good prints and fine curios, the music cabinet and the shelves of scientific works all reflected Belgrade's virile and complex personality.

"It is necessary for your purpose that Hull be kept alive, and you shanghaied me to do the job," Adam summed up. "Is that it?"

"Precisely. Hull must be preserved for one month, at the most two. After that, it is God's will."

This amazing bit of piety did not impress Adam, at the time.

"What if I refuse to treat him?"

Belgrade seemed shocked. "You wouldn't betray your profession, Weismann. Besides, when you realize what a big thing this is, you'll be as zealous for its success as I am. Anyway, the sooner he dies, the later our return. If he lives, the cruise will be short, perhaps only two months. If he dies, we go on just the same, but with greatly increased difficulties."

There fell a long silence. Adam got up and looked out the porthole. The ship was well out into the bay by now; the lights of Sydney were a yellow mist low on the skyline. Beholding the cool, still waters, Adam himself became cool and still. His body ceased trembling; his pulse resumed

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its normal rate. Once more his mind moved under the mastery of his will, and he could think clearly and constructively. He began to pin down the facts of the situation with scientific care.

He was astonished at his own composure. Perhaps this was merely relief from immediate physical danger; possibly he was secretly reconciled to what might prove a thrilling adventure. Anyway, the affair was out of his hands. He was a prisoner, and might as well make the best of it.

He swung back to Belgrade and looked him in the eyes. "Where are we bound, professor?" he asked quietly.

Belgrade's smile was a white flash. "Doctor, that's the first sensible remark you've made. Perhaps you are *weis mann*, after all. I can't think you are meanly trying to put me off guard. I'll tell the whole thing."

THE STORY Belgrade told began twenty years before. Adam remembered reading part of it—the Gilbert expedition to the Antarctic continent in 1908, and the loss of one of his ships, the *Penguin*. According to Gilbert's diary, found in a stone cache, the ship was abandoned in the ice and all hands sought refuge on the floe. The floe drifted away; the ship was caught between two high bergs and believed crushed.

Bravely the castaways started for their base, two hundred miles distant. They were equipped with dog teams as well as boats in which they hoped to cross the open leads. But not one man survived to tell the tale.

"But one man did survive," Belgrade related with gleaming eyes. "One man survives yet. He lies, doctor, in the cabin adjoining mine."

"Hull?"

"Yes. You won't remember his name in the book. He was not one of the leaders, but the ship's cook."

A grim thought flicked through Adam's mind. A ship's cook would be trusted with food supplies. At once Belgrade displayed what seemed to be telepathic insight. Perhaps he merely followed his guest's reasoning; possibly he saw the dim look of scorn in his face.

"He was the cook, but he didn't take advantage of that fact. He is a typical sentimental Briton of the lower class. He was saved mostly by the combination of coincidence which he calls luck; partly, because he was the second strongest man in the party."

"But the strongest died?"

"Not then. He was saved too, and lived for many years, but is now dead. You may remember reading of him. His name was Morrison, first mate of the ship."

Belgrade related how Morrison and Hull, the two strongest men in the party, were sent on daily hunting trips after penguin and seal. During one of these trips, the moving ice opened a broad lead between them and their companions. Gilbert believed them dead; he and his men mushed on to find death themselves.

"So Hull and Morrison were saved, and the rest perished."

"But who saved them? There was no other expedition in the Antarctic at that time."

"The natives."

Adam gaped in astonishment. "Are you crazy, or am I?" he demanded. "There are no natives in the Antarctic."

"So?" Belgrade's eyes glittered with excitement.

"The Antarctic continent is a waste of ice, snow, and glacier. No one could live there. Of course great areas of it have never been explored—"

"So you think, Doctor Weismann, that I am going on a fool's errand?"

"You are an anthropologist and a scientific man. No, I can't imagine you going off half-cocked. But if there are people on the Antarctic Continent, it will be the most sensational discovery of the century."

"Sensational is no word for it. Weismann, there is not the slightest doubt that at least one race of people, and possibly two, inhabit the vast Antarctic Continent. They live on a portion of the coast that is not shown on any map, and is believed to be frozen sea."

Hull and Morrison had crossed a great mountain chain beyond which lay a vast new land, large as all of the New England states put together, and possibly the whole of Texas. High mountains hid it on one side; what appeared to be impassible ice barricaded it on the other.

This area had a somewhat milder climate than the rest of Antarctica. It resembled the Arctic rather than the bitter South—no trees, of course, but immense spaces of mossy tundra which in the summer months, late December to late February, were clear of snow. The ground was frozen hard a foot below the surface the year round, as in the Arctic, but the steady sunlight made a few flowers bloom,

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thawed the rivers, and made land life possible.

Hull thought that the somewhat milder climate, compared of course to the frigid despair of the remainder of the continent, was due to volcanic phenomena. It is true that there are many active volcanoes in the Antarctic ranges, so the theory did not seem too far-fetched. He told of many hot springs in the Moss Country, and small craters filled with molten lava in the caves of the hills. But there was a more reasonable explanation, Belgrade said. In the first place, the high mountains sheltered the country from the cold south winds, and arrested and condensed the warm winds from the north. In the second place the strange behavior of the ice indicated that there was a warm current of water, comparable to the Japan Current in Alaska, washing its shores.

According to Hull, the people of the Moss Country were "blond Eskimos," and even more heathenish and uncivilized than the dark Eskimos of the North.

"Blond Eskimos!" Adam's tone expressed utter disbelief. "It doesn't sound possible, Belgrade. True, an Arctic explorer claims he found blond Eskimos, but how could such people get to the Antarctic? Whether they are blond or dark isn't important—the wonder is that the same race could occupy both ends of the earth, with no trace of 'em between. You surely don't believe that."

"What I believe is my own affair. I give you Hull's words. He says they are Eskimos, and he is as intelligent as most men of his class. He has been to Nome, Alaska, as a young man, and has seen some of that race."

"Do they live like Eskimos?"

"So he says. They live in igloos—hunt—carve ivory."

UP TO this point, Hull's story seemed to be clear and rational; now it became confused and incredible. But this was no wonder: his terrible ordeal on the ice and the nameless peaks and glaciers had made him queer; and it was at least possible that he had been tortured by the natives. At times he raved of a chamber of horrors that he called the Cave of Death; he spoke of fierce animals that lived in dens beside the sea; he repeatedly mentioned elephants.

"There's nothing crazy about that last," Adam said. "He means an immense kind of seal, called the sea-elephant, found in the

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Antarctic. You know that as well as I do."

"I know nothing—until I get there. However, Morrison took a few pictures you might like to see. It seems he carried a small camera, which he didn't throw away when he thought his jig was up. He hoped that his body would be found and the pictures tell the story. Commendable scientific spirit, eh?"

Both Morrison and Hull settled down in the tribe. Morrison was greatly liked by the people, married the chief's daughter. According to Hull, she swayed more power than the chief himself. Primitive government is quite frequently matriarchal, Belgrade explained. If the woman's mother was dead, she, and not her father, would be the supreme power.

But although Morrison was welcomed by the tribe, Hull remained an outcast. Except for Morrison's protection he would have been killed or driven away. He was married to an ill-favored woman, and forced to live beyond the outskirts of the village.

"Did Hull ever explain what the people had against him?" Adam asked with intense curiosity.

Belgrade answered the question by asking another. "Did you notice Hull's right eye?"

"They objected to that, did they? Well, that's reasonable enough. If they had never seen the defect before, they might think it was the evil eye."

"Hull implies the thing was more complicated. We shall see when we arrive."

After many years with the blond Eskimos, Morrison began to long for his own people, and to help Hull plan escape. But how could they bridge the void of desolate ice and uncharted seas between them and the nearest whaling station in the South Seas? The answer was one of the strangest things in a strange tale.

In summer-time there was always open water on the coasts of the Moss Country. Into this still sea the *Penguin* came drifting. Apparently a warm current from the north had melted the ice that held her fast. By a miracle she was not greatly damaged, so Morrison induced his tribesmen to tow her in and beach her in front of the village.

The two Englishmen worked patiently at her repairs, with the desperate hope of sailing her home. They kept her painted with native paints; they rigged sails and calked leaking seams. But they were not fated to take the cruise together. In the hour of hope, when their plans were complete and the scheme had begun to seem actually feasible, Morrison met with a fatal accident in the hunting field.

Hull was immediately expelled from the tribe. The natives helped him launch the ship, put him aboard with a supply of seal meat, and towed him out into the bay. He was not wholly alone. At the last moment his ill-favored "Eskimo" wife threw her fortunes with his. They were left to the mercy of the wind, the wave, and the drifting ice.

Favorable winds carried the ship into the open ocean. There they drifted helplessly, the prey of wind and current, until their supplies were gone and famine added its slow horror to the journey. At the last, Hull was alone. For reasons unknown, or untold, the woman threw herself into the sea. When Hull was about to follow her—half-mad with loneliness and fear and half-dead with starvation—a whaler appeared on the skyline.

The whaler towed the *Penguin* into Port Stanley, in the Falkland Islands. Here Hull met Belgrade, on his way home from Patagonia, and for the first time told his story. Belgrade swore Hull to secrecy, supplied money to pay salvage charges, and had the *Penguin* reconditioned. Then he recruited a crew of whalers, familiar with the Antarctic seas, and sailing by way of New Zealand, started for the Moss Country.

Adam now understood the unusual stature of the crew. As a rule, whalers are good-sized men. To chase leviathan through the ice-laden seas is one of the hardest games that men play.

"Of course the whalers don't know the purpose of the expedition," Belgrade said. "They think I am a crack-brained scientific man going on an ordinary journey of exploration. They will sail the ship, under Hull's directions, as close as they can to the Moss Country; then we will fly the rest of the way, take pictures, gather data, and fly back to the ship."

"And return to civilization with a scoop of the century," Adam concluded.

"I fancy my reports will receive considerable attention." Belgrade spoke complacently. "This, doctor, is the situation. If Hull lives, he will show us a short path through the ice. If he dies, we must go on the best we may by the poor maps he is able to draw, but I pray to the scientific god that he may not die! Of course, doctor, with your valued assistance."

"Of course Hull does not know he is under sentence of death, or he wouldn't come with you."

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"He mustn't know. It is a small matter, where the welfare of science is concerned. Come, Weismann. What do you say? Are you going to cooperate with me, or make trouble? Surely you realize what a vastly important thing it is—"

"That's what I do not realize." Adam spoke bluntly. "I can't see that it is any life-and-death matter if you fail to find these people, or if the world never learns of their existence. You've been frank with me, and I'll be frank with you—I think the work of any country doctor, in his effort to save human life, is in many ways more important than this."

Belgrade was plainly horrified. "Life! You speak as if human life were something rare and precious, instead of common as dirt. I'm disappointed in you, Weismann. You are blaspheming science."

"I admit it will be a fine thing for you," Adam went on, unmoved, "and it will increase the world's knowledge. Moreover, it should be an interesting adventure for both of us."

The Slav brightened. "Then you agree to go through with it, and cause no trouble? That's a good fellow."

"Good fellow be damned. I agree to nothing other than to try to keep Hull alive—which is my own kind of a job. I'll go with you, but that doesn't mean I owe you any loyalty, or that I approve of your methods. And if the chance offers, I may pay you back for the indignity you put on me tonight."

CHAPTER II

ANTARCTIC SECRET

ON THE second day out, Hull's condition took a turn for the worse. Adam wondered if he would live to see the midnight sun. He seemed to realize that his days were numbered, because he talked of his home in England, and asked to look over a number of photographs he kept in his locker.

Among these were the pictures Belgrade had mentioned. But the photographer had not discounted the low sun of the polar regions, and the prints were not plain. One of them represented a dead animal, apparently a bear. The other, of a group of Antarcticans, was somewhat clearer, but the men's faces were darkened by their parka hoods and told Adam nothing he did not already know. They were dressed in what seemed to be Eskimo costume, and looked considerably larger than the short, stocky men of the Arctic.

The remainder of the photographs, although taken with the same camera, seemed typical snapshots of English scenes and people. Adam looked through them more to please his patient than for any other reason. But the last one in the collection, an enlargement from a camera negative, made him stop and stare.

It was the picture of a young girl, apparently an English girl, of about sixteen years of age. It showed bare shoulders and throat, but was cut off too short to reveal even the top of her dress. Her hair, which was evidently yellow as his own, was plaited in a great braid, encircling her head like a coronet. It was a fashion of hair-dressing with which Adam was unfamiliar, but which suggested the classic Greek.

Adam could not remember a lovelier picture. The girl's face was singularly arresting, possessing a beauty that was almost a new kind of beauty, not merely a refinement of ordinary girlhood prettiness. The face was oval and rather broad at the cheek-bones. The nose was delicate, high-bridged, the eyes wide apart, the mouth full and luscious, the whole head beautifully shaped. Yet none of these features or their combination explained the girl's peculiar charm.

Her features were wonderfully delicate, yet she looked strong. He could imagine her in old Hellas, as an Athenian girl with the legend of a river-god somewhere in her ancestry. In her eyes and the set of her head there was an intense, seeming-righteous pride which no parvenue could pretend; at the same time a curious wild look not to be reconciled with a conventional English environment. She looked as if she could feel richly, love fiercely, live fully.

What was Hull doing with a picture like this? What contacts could he have with the chosen of the earth? It might be as interesting a story as his adventure in the far South.

"Who is this girl?" Adam asked Hull.

"She's the daughter o' my best friend."

"She seems to be very pretty."

Adam made this comment in a restrained tone. Yet Hull seemed almost pitifully grateful and pleased, as if the compliment reacted in some personal way. "I think so, too," he agreed earnestly. "I think she's one of the prettiest gals I ever seen. But there's some who wouldn't have sense enough to know it."

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It is not possible to fall in love with a photograph. Anyway, Adam was a cold-blooded scientist who would find it hard to fall in love at all. Yet for the moment he skated at the edge of sophomoric, ridiculous romanticism. He fancied himself questioning the sick man, learning the girl's name and address, and crossing the seas to find her.

At once he was so contemptuous of this nonsense that he refused to ask even casual and polite questions about the girl; and at Hull's request, shut up the photograph with the others in the locker. But he did not at once shut it out of his memory. The wild, arresting face haunted him off and on for days.

THE *Penguin* steamed southward. The days grew steadily longer, the nights colder. Icebergs began to gleam like fabulous sapphires on the breast of the sea. Along the southern horizon was a faint white line, which was the ice-blink from the floes.

There is an authentic mystery in the polar regions. It is a sense of the nearness of vast forces moving beyond human ken. The ebb and floe of the ice, the storms that rise and beat across the empty seas, the strange sun that hangs for months above the horizon and for months hides away, and over it all the curse of the Great Cold —to the awful splendor of these Adam was sharply sensitive. What manner of people could dwell in this silence, this solitude? He looked forward with a growing excitement to the journey's end.

When they entered the open pack, Hull acted as navigator. A cot was provided for him in the pilot house; with the aid of instruments and a glass he got his bearings and set the course. For ten days the vessel fought ice. Often the way seemed blocked by heavy hummocked pack, but always a lane opened to let her through these fields, otherwise she would have been ice-bound long before now. But it was slow work, and Belgrade grew savage with impatience.

For Adam, every day was an adventure. On the sheltered shores of the nameless islands he saw herds of sea-elephants—grotesque giant seals as big as young whales. On the floes were sea-leopards and crab-eater seals; in the open water the great dorsal fins of the killer-whales idled like lazy sails. Once, in great excitement, a sailor showed him what seemed to be a crowd of people adrift on a floe—splendid people in immaculate black and white—but they proved to be emperor penguins, bowing sedately as the ship sailed by.

At last the ship emerged into a still sea, open except for scattered fields of drift ice. Beyond were towering ice-cliffs, forming what seemed to be an unbroken barricade. What lay beyond those cliffs Belgrade himself could not wholly imagine. His black eyes snapped with excitement.

"That's the last ice between here and the Moss Country," Hull said. "Professor, I've brought ye this far, but ye've got to go the rest of the way alone."

Exhausted, he sank back on his cot. Instantly Belgrade was at his side, trying to rouse him. "But you must go with me, in the plane. How can I find the villages without you? Confound you, Hull, you don't dare fail me now."

Adam's distrust of Belgrade was now vindicated. He had victimized Hull, and had tried the same tactics on Adam himself. The great Slav had never intended to share any part of his honors with the American, and had schemed to leave him aboard the whaler and never let him lay eyes on the new people dwelling beyond the barrier. He meant to take no one but Hull in the seaplane, and after the latter's death, he could stand in the limelight alone.

Fortunately, Adam had anticipated this move, and had taken steps to checkmate it. "Take the Doc in my place," Hull said. "I've talked to 'im when he was sittin' up with me, and told him all the landmarks, and he's learned 'em by heart. He'll guide ye to the villages."

"But I want *you* to go." Belgrade stood over the cot, and in his frenzy, shook the sick man by the shoulders. "I want you to try it anyway. Remember the gold you can carry away, the fine furs and ivory."

But Hull was no longer concerned with gold and furs and ivory. His gaze became fixed; he mumbled of long-ago events. He seemed to be dying before their eyes, and when Belgrade laid hands on him again, Adam came to his rescue.

It was a belated rescue, true. Adam was not proud of his treatment of the dying man; all his professional instincts had rebelled against the sorry conspiracy in which he had tacitly participated. Hull was the "goat" of the expedition. Even the crew had realized that he could not survive the journey and would have no share in its profits. He should have been encouraged to spend his last days among his own people in the comforts of a civilized

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land, but instead he had been inveigled into an arduous sea-journey the like of which, God knew, he had had enough. Encouraged by a false friend, he had come to this lonely desolate place only to die, and Adam resolved that at least he should die in peace and quiet.

"Doctor, get me a hypodermic needle, quick," Belgrade commanded. "I'm going to give him a shot of strychnine, and keep him alive long enough to question him—"

"No, you won't." Adam's face was brick red. "He's had enough trouble and pain without being called back to answer your questions."

The sallow face before him darkened with anger. "You are a stubborn fool. What is a little extra pain and trouble compared to the possible failure of our expedition? It won't make the slightest difference an hour from now—he's half dead already."

"You call me a stubborn fool again, and I'll show you how stubborn I can be." Adam's eyes were blazing. "Try to find those villages by yourself."

It was a trump card. Belgrade hesitated a moment, then chose to yield. Certainly his chances for success were far better if Adam accompanied him in the plane. On the other hand, Hull's usefulness was all but ended. Even under a stimulant, he would not be able to describe landmarks and give directions.

When the midnight sun was a red ball on the horizon, Hull raised on his elbow with a chattering cry. "The Cave o' Death!" he stammered, in pitiable terror. "They're takin' me to the Cave o' Death."

"You're all right," Adam answered hoarsely, himself shaken deeply by the sudden cry. "You're safe in your own bed on the ship."

"But the Eskimo woman has jumped overboard?"

"Long ago. It's all over now. You're with friends."

"Friends? You're the only friend I got." He sank back on the cot, free at last from the semi-delirium that had clouded his brain so many weeks. "The professor has made a monkey out o' me from first to last. I hadn't ought to brought him here. He's just the first—from now on people will come in shiploads, and the tribe'll go to the dogs."

This thought had not yet occurred to Adam. It startled him profoundly. "There's no help for it now."

"I guess not. But it's a wicked shame, just the same, as you'll see when you get there. . . . I leave it all in your hands."

His lips continued to move, but made no sound. Evidently he had spent his last strength. Adam watched the life go out of him as embers die in an untended fire. His eyes filmed over, his face turned gray.

Yet once more the moving lips formed audible sound. Adam bent low to hear.

"Look after her, Doc," he seemed to be saying. "She's the daughter o' my best friend."

Had the delirium taken him again? There seemed no other explanation. What had his friend's lovely white-skinned daughter to do with the savages of the Moss Country? But Adam would never hear the explanation from Hull's lips. The case was completed.

BELGRADE got together his outfit—three days' supply of provisions, a small pneumatic boat, warm clothes, navigating instruments, and a small receiving set by which he could learn the position of the ship, in case ice or storm forced her to weigh anchor. He had, however, no sending set. He did not wish to give any information to the listening air until his venture was complete. He armed himself with a rifle, but for reasons of his own, provided no weapon for his companion. Adam's outfit consisted of warm clothes, a hunting knife, his medical bag, and a few personal things.

They hopped off in the seaplane, crossed the ice barrier, and twenty minutes later were looking down on the Moss Country—limitless tracks of muskeg and tundra similar to northern Alaska. It was a bleak, desolate region, yet a garden of fertility compared to the ice-bound wastes of the remainder of the Antarctic continent. Most of the country was flat, watered by large rivers and dotted with lakes, but in the far distance there was a pearly gleam that meant low mountain chains, possibly spurs from the immense range to the south. The land fronted a broad sea, open except for drift ice.

As the hours droned by, the country became more hilly, and mountains of considerable height flanked the sea; in between stretched immense broad valleys where any number of Eskimo villages might lie hidden. What lived in these valleys, Adam could but guess. For safety's sake, and to look over as much country as possible, Belgrade flew high. Adam could see well enough to locate a cluster of igloos, with the attendant boats, skin racks, and so on, but any wild animals roaming

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the tundra remained completely invisible.

Once his eyes caught a dozen or more black spots in the neck of a valley. They looked too large to be animals—at least any animals he could imagine—and they were plainly not human habitations. He concluded they must be immense rocks, deposited here by volcanic or glacial action.

They crossed an immense river—it looked as big as the Potomac—and gazed down on a country somewhat more inviting than the rest. It was a narrow strip between low mountains and the sea; the shore was free of ice, the moss verdant green. The hills were bare of snow almost to their crest, indicating that the intense cold was considerably tempered by the warm current sweeping in from the north.

But they were not to continue their lofty survey. The air proved to be unusually rough and bumpy. Half an hour beyond the great river, they struck an air pocket that seemed to let the bottom fall out of the ship. They dropped a short distance like a diving tern, hit the hard air with force that jarred every nut and bolt in the ship, took hold, and winged on. But they had not come out unscathed. Belgrade, an expert airman, instantly realized that an oil line had broken.

There is no choice of action in a case like this. He shut off his engine, leaned out of his seat, and looked for a place to land. Watching him, Adam appreciated for the first time the mettle of this man. If he were even fased by the disaster, his face did not show it. His eyes were alert and keen, but there seemed to be no terror in them.

Gravity was already exerting its inexorable pull on the ship and she was descending in long glides. The roar of the motor had ceased; the only sound in the baffling silence was the whistling whir of the propeller. The sea lifted slowly toward them.

Belgrade decided to light in a sheltered bay some two miles ahead. It seemed safer than trusting to the submerged reefs of the open sea. Soon he realized that he had made a disastrous, perhaps a fatal mistake. Mud banks and sand-bars just awash showed up like long sea-serpents. But it was too late now to change his tactics. The ship was swooping like a great fish hawk over the water. The pontoons splashed, rose, splashed again, tore through a mud bank, and came to rest with a jar.

Even so, it was a better landing than either man had hoped for. They were both battered and shaken, but not in the least hurt, and as far as they could tell the plane had received no considerable damage. Belgrade turned gravely to his companion.

"Perhaps I am not slated to find the villages and make the great discovery," he said. "Perhaps the ice will keep its secret."

Of his own peril he did not speak, probably did not even think. But Adam thought, and spoke too, quickly enough. "We've got to find the villages, or leave our bones on the coast. Let's get to shore as quickly as we can. Then we'll climb a hill, and try to locate Hull's landmarks."

In ten minutes the small pneumatic boat was ready. They safeguarded the ship the best they could, took a few of their most necessary belongings, and rowed to shore. Presently they were standing side by side on the crest of a low hill.

They were aware of a comforting mutual respect. Although they stood at opposite poles in many regards, both had the capacity to play a hard game through to the finish. Enemies they had been; enemies they would be again; but now they were almost comrades.

"The plane is useless until we can get fire and tools to repair it, and that means we have to walk," Adam summed up. "We're able-bodied men, and can walk a long way, even with very little food. The question is, which way shall we go?"

"Toward the villages, of course. What are you thinking of, Weismann?"

"Where are they? You don't know, and I don't either. It's entirely possible that they lie at the end of one of the headlands we flew over, and are behind us instead of in front. No amount of walking will do us any good if we go in the wrong direction."

"What about Hull's landmarks?"

"They're pretty vague. According to them, we ought to be close to the villages right now. Well, we'll go on the rest of the day. If we don't find them—"

The remark ended in the air. The two started down the long coast. The country was desolate, forbidding; the wind swept over the tundra with a low moan infinitely melancholy. They searched the sand for tracks of animals, but it was bare as desert sands. Looking back after an hour's tramp, it seemed they had been walking on a treadmill. The flying boat was still in plain sight.

Today, they had sped a hundred miles an hour. Now it took them almost half an

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"I am the daughter of the Sun and the Moon. When either the Sun or the Moon is in the sky, no one may disobey me."

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hour to gain a single mile. And every step took them farther from their own kind—from familiar scenes and known sources of help—farther and farther into the utterly unknown.

The day wore on. Their hopes ebbed. When the shadows were long and the evening mists drifted over the sea, they came to a deep river, flowing out of a narrow valley between high bluffs. To cross this river they must inflate the boat. As Adam, stern-lipped, spread it out and got the small air-pump ready, Belgrade touched him on the arm.

"Doctor, this is the Rubicon," he said. Deep, haggard lines creased his sallow skin. "If we cross this, we'll never have the heart to go back to the plane, and search the country behind us. We'll plunge on down this coast till we drop."

Adam straightened wearily. "I thought we would find 'em before now. It begins to look as though we got off wrong, somehow. What do you think we'd better do—go on, or turn back?"

But Belgrade could not answer. Either way was dark enough. His hope, and Adam's too, was at low tide. The long cold shadow of the dunes dropped slowly over them, the cold winds chilled them to the bone.

But at that moment the tide turned. From behind the great dunes at the river mouth they heard a low-booming reverberant sound. It seemed to be the beat of a stone hammer on a bronze gong.

BEHIND the dunes lay the Antarctic villages. Of this there was no further doubt; Hull's incredible story had been vindicated. The solemn sounds were man-made, and were not the reverberating harp-notes of the wind such as travelers sometimes hear in the open tundra. The two castaways gazed into each other's brightening eyes.

For a moment they could only listen, thrilled and awed. They had found not only safety, food for their clamoring bodies and refuge from the menacing cold and solitude of these long beaches, but the fulfilment of their highest hopes. Beyond the river dwelt a new people. Adam and Belgrade were about to behold wonders hidden from all other eyes. The curtain was rolling up on the greatest adventure of their lives.

Then came the inevitable personal reaction. Belgrade began to conjecture about the gong. He had heard the like before, in primitive tribes; usually it was the news-crier of the village. He wondered if he could conceal from Adam its many cultural meanings as well as the meanings of other institutions and customs which the Antarcticans might have. How he wished he had made the trip alone, and need not share with Adam the scientific triumphs to come!

To Adam came a queer prickly feeling over his face and back which he remembered from occasional great moments in his laboratory. He foresaw that Belgrade and himself were about to make an astounding discovery—not just the presence of blond Antarctic Eskimos, but something far more wonderful. The source of the inspiration he did not at once know, but he soon perceived it was the same that inspired Belgrade to greedy thoughts. The swelling sounds they were hearing arose from a metal gong, not a hollow log with a skin stretched across it. Therefore the Antarcticans could not be a stone age people, utterly uncivilized. If they possessed metals, they must also have a rudimentary culture. It was ever harder to believe that they could be "blond Eskimos".

Hull had said that they were even less civilized than Arctic Eskimos, but he had no contacts with the remote Eskimo tribes, and had seen only the store-clothed, pipe-smoking, sugar-eating half-breeds of Nome, Alaska. What he considered a state of utter barbarism might prove to be, from a scientific standpoint, an ancient and considerable civilization.

Adam would soon know. He, too, was a scientist, and Belgrade could not blind his eyes. The pure bliss of intellectual stimulation swept him in a thrilling flood.

A fleet of canoes appeared around a bend in the river half a mile distant. Fish-shaped, decked over except for a hole where the paddler sat, they looked like Eskimo kayaks. Did this go to show that the people were Eskimos?

But Weismann's doubts continued to grow. The kayaks did not lend strength to Hull's theory, but merely offered an explanation for his mistake. If a man of the cook's meager experience perceived that a race of people wore Eskimo clothes and paddled kayaks, he would naturally conclude that they were Eskimos, and would not look further. Yet it would be entirely possible for an Antarctic people to invent the kayak and the parka on their own account. These articles were naturally fitted for sea-hunting in a cold country, and an intelligent race would be bound to hit upon them in time.

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The boatmen swept nearer. He could see that they were paddlers of supreme skill; the little crafts cut the water in long V-shaped lines. Presently they ran into shore and landed.

The low sun threw a thin, yellow radiance upon them. And at the first scrutiny of their faces, Adam no longer questioned, he *knew*. These men were not blond Eskimos, or Eskimos of any kind. Belgrade could no longer deceive him, on this point. They were a people apart—perhaps a new race, unkenned by science, or else a lost tribe from some ancient race supposedly vanished from the earth.

To begin with, the men ran unusually large. Wondering at this, Adam failed to observe another fact no less amazing and far more mysterious—that their stature was uniform, as if they had all been cast in the same mold. The shortest among them was but two inches under six feet, the tallest not two inches over. They seemed to have rather short arms, enormous chests, broad shoulders, and long, heavy legs. They wore highly decorated garments of some unfamiliar silver fox.

Their faces were unusually broad; the space between the cheek-bones in all but two of the men was astonishing. In this respect they did resemble Eskimos, a fact that contributed to Hull's mistake. But in all other features they were as far from any of the Arctic natives as Adam could imagine.

Their eyes were not dull and sunken—furtive shadows moving in fleshy slits—but vivid, wide-open, and bright blue. Adam had never seen more intelligent eyes. Their hair, showing under the parka hoods, and in long mustaches worn by some of the men, was not coarse and black like Eskimo hair, but yellow and fine.

Their noses were finely chiseled, not flat; their mouths humorous and mobile, not expressionless and coarse. Their skins were not dirty, oily and swart, but decidedly fair and, in spite of their windtan, as fresh-looking as Adam's own.

Their heads were nobly shaped. Their carriage, their physical grace, their bright proud faces, and even the beauty of their fur garments instantly declared that they were not an inferior people, but one of the superb races of the earth. True, they were uncivilized. Apparently they were just emerging from the Neolithic Age. But this was not necessarily due to lack of intellectual capacity, but to the unfavorable environment in which they were forced to live.

They were white, whiter than Belgrade for instance, yet they remained a race apart. They did not look like Indo-Europeans, or any other people of Adam's acquaintance. Who were they? Belgrade probably already knew—he was an anthropologist of rare distinction—but Adam did not know, and he determined to solve this absorbing mystery without help from his jealous companion.

Among the number were two boys about sixteen and eighteen years old, who were slightly darker than the others. One of them had brown hair, rather than yellow, and one had hazel eyes instead of blue. It was apparent, too, that the breadth of their cheekbones was not so pronounced. The reasons for these variations struck Adam with thrilling force.

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The older of the two boys stepped forth from the group of his fellows. "You—English?" he asked carefully.

Adam almost jumped out of his shoes. "I am an American," he answered. "My companion is a European."

The youth nodded, smiling dimly. "I heard my father speak of America, also Europe," he said slowly, feeling for his words. Then, with greater confidence, "Is he with you?"

"Who?"

"Mister Hull. He said he would come back some day. We thought it was him."

SO THESE were Hull's children by his native wife. Because their father was a white man, a brunette, to be sure, they were darker than their snowy fellows. Plainly they had learned their father's speech in early childhood.

"Hull started with us, but died at sea," Adam answered.

"Died?" The youth slowly nodded, his face showing wonderment but no sign of grief. It might be that death was commonplace in the Antarctic villages, or else it was regarded from some pagan viewpoint unknown in Christian countries. "Is my mother dead, too?"

"Yes, long ago."

"We urged her not to leave the Moss Country, but she followed my father. It is death out there, beyond the Ice. All the people but us have died; the stories say so. What's your name?"

"Doctor Weismann. This is Professor Belgrade."

"My name is Jim-Hull. My father said so. My brother's name is Tom-Hull. We are not of the Temple. We are what we call *Ug Paddrin*."

"What does *Ug Paddrin* mean?"

"What father called, let me think, the under dogs. Our hair is too dark; we do not pass."

Before Weismann could question him further, one of the older men—a mighty-thewed brave who seemed in command of the party—spoke authoritatively in his own tongue. Jim-Hull whirled to listen, then turned again to the visitors. "Gort-Chil—that means Big Seal—says that you are to come. They have struck the gong, and the Fathers of Men are gathering in what we call the Right Place, the Temple. Dian must never be kept waiting."

"Dian." The short hairs crept on Adam's neck. "Did you say Dian?" He echoed Jim-Hull's pronunciation of the word, with a long *i* and with accent on the last syllable.

"That is what we call her. I don't know what the name means in English. She is the Daughter of the Sun and the Moon."

Adam turned to Belgrade, for the moment forgetting his feud with his fellow-scientist. "Did you hear that? Dian is the classical Goddess of the Moon. How could these people know it?"

"Perhaps it is only coincidence. The same word often exists in two wholly unrelated languages. These people are not Ancient Greeks or Romans, but savages."

Adam turned back to Jim-Hull. "Tell Gort-Chil we are ready to go."

Jim-Hull repeated the message, and the men began to confer together. Their gestures indicated that they were in doubt how to transport the two visitors across the river in their one-man boats. But Adam decided to look after this himself. It might have a good effect upon the people.

He began to pump up the pneumatic canoe. The villagers fell silent, fascinated. But they were not in the least alarmed to see the flat canvas taking shape as a boat. Probably they were used to inflating bladders to use as buoys on their seal-harpoons. "Start off, and we'll follow you," Adam told Jim-Hull.

Rowing as fast as they could, the two visitors followed the tribesmen up the river. They landed just above the next bend, to find themselves at the foot of the village. Gort-Chil guided them toward what seemed to be an immense mound built on a low hill.

In the short walk, Adam's eyes were busy. He observed that the houses were

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similar to Eskimo igloos—turf huts, half underground, and approached through low tunnels. This was to be expected, no other type of dwelling would exclude the intense cold of the Antarctic winters. Picketed nearby were the sledge dogs—wolfish brutes, even more savage than Eskimo huskies, and snow white in color.

Really, they were no more than white wolves, somewhat larger, perhaps, than European wolves. In a pen made of whale ribs back of the houses there were a number of other animals that looked like undersized buffalo, with long wind-blown hair, but they were too far distant to identify for certain.

Shy children peeped from the tunnel mouths—sturdy, yellow-haired youngsters clothed in beautiful furs. The women either stayed concealed in the dwellings, or had assembled with the men at the temple. About the huts was evidence of a primitive culture—fish-nets made of sinew and thongs, racks for drying fish, and great frames for stretching skins. What manner of skins would fit such frames, Adam could not imagine. They were big enough for whales.

THE temple proved to be nothing more or less than an immense igloo, built in the shape of a mound and supported by snow-white pillars of whale bone. Gort-Chil and the other leaders escorted the visitors in; the two Hulls remained with men of their own caste outside the temple door.

When Adam's eyes became adjusted to the changed light, he stood spellbound. He would never forget this scene. The vast room was circular, and the assembled tribes-people sat in rows about the walls. Adam could not guess how many there were—four hundred at least. The braves, who sat in the outer ring, held whale-oil lamps that shed a flickering yellow gleam, and made fitful shadows dance and cavort on the arched ceiling. An open space was left in the middle of the room, and here a bright flame leaped out of a stone vessel supported—and here was a suggestion of the classic Greek—by a tripod. Beside the ivory tripod, on a stool of carved ivory, Dian was waiting.

She got up when the visitors entered, and the altar fire threw a golden gleam on her face. Adam, who now was moving boldly toward her, stopped in his tracks. The whites of his eyes reflected the flickering light.

The face was startlingly familiar. Almost instantly, he recognized it as the original of Hull's photograph. Why hadn't he guessed the truth, long ago? The dying man had said that the girl was the daughter of his best friend. Of course she was—the daughter of Morrison, Hull's companion, who had befriended and protected him against the Antarcticans. Morrison had married the hereditary princess of the tribe. Upon his wife's death, her daughter would naturally inherit the tribal scepter. Such is the practise in matriarchal forms of government.

When Adam had first seen the picture, he had noticed the breadth between the girl's cheek-bones, as well as a pagan look he could not analyze. But because she was beautiful and proud and fair, he had been unable to imagine her as a barbarian princess, and had gone to great shifts to explain her as an English girl.

Was he disillusioned now? On the contrary, the photograph had scarcely done her justice. That he, Adam Weismann, a man of science and the child of a calloused age, should with his own eyes behold romance like this, made his brain reel. The picture had been taken at least two years before, and there were slight changes in her appearance that made her all the more alluring. Her braids were not now coiled about her head, but hung in front of her shoulders, Indian fashion, like thick ropes of yellow gold.

Her only garment was a gorgeous wild animal fur, silvery in hue, from her waist to midway on her thighs. Her legs were bare, her feet clad in sandals of a pattern Adam had never seen before. She wore a metal breast plate, one side silver, the other gold, representing the sun and the moon. Her only ornaments were broad gold bands about her upper arms.

Adam had read widely of primitive peoples, and he believed he understood her decorations. She was not only the temporal ruler of the tribe, but its goddess. As in Ancient Eygpt, and in every other land where absolute monarchs held sway, the reigning family claimed divine origin.

Jim-Hull had said that Dian was the daughter of the Sun and the Moon. Probably there was a legend in the tribe, ancient as the ice, of how Diana had married Apollo (the sun-god was probably known by a different name) and of how a daughter born of this marriage had founded the dynasty.

He had wondered at the pride in her face and in the carriage of her head, but he could understand it now. She herself

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probably never doubted but that she was descended from the gods, and certainly she wielded temporal power over her little world which Oriental sultans and European dictators might well envy.

These lost people whom she ruled worshipped physical perfection. Jim-Hull had revealed this in his few words; besides, the stature of the men and their surprising uniformity of physique bore mute witness to the same fact. Dian herself was the embodiment of a physical ideal, the product of centuries of mate-selecting by the tribal queens. She was a tall girl, finely formed. Her straight bare limbs flashed ivory-white in the firelight. She was athletic rather than buxom; she looked as if she could run like a deer.

Her English blood had refined her beauty without taking away the pagan look native to her race. Her cheek-bones were less broad than those of her subjects, and made her face oval in shape. She had a small pointed chin which Adam had noticed in the tribesmen, and the same vivid blue eyes, but the top of her nose was not sunken like theirs, and her profile was more noticeably aquiline.

When Adam had first seen her photograph, he fancied her an Athenian girl, with the legend of an Olympian courtship and marriage somewhere in her mortal ancestry. Now, beholding her splendid body, he thought of her as a Gothic princess beyond the uttermost sway of Rome, perhaps a daughter of Vercingetorix on a forest throne.

DIAN smiled dimly into Adam's face and bent her head slightly in greeting. "Who are you, who come from beyond the Ice?" she asked, in Adam's own tongue. As yet she did not even glance at Belgrade.

Naturally she would talk English. She had learned it in earliest childhood from her father's lips. But it was not easy to explain her stately, almost classical expression, and the purity of her forms. It must be that Morrison had tried to do well by his pagan daughter. Keenly conscious of her dignity as princess and priestess, he had taught her the best English that he knew. The rest was the influence of her mother tongue imposed on her English speech, and of her own proud conception of her position. She was the daughter of the Sun and the Moon.

On the lips of Dian, the words did not sound in the least stilted or strained. Adam could not imagine her speaking any other way. Her voice was a pleasant contralto, rich and deep.

"Adam Weismann," he told her.

"Adam? Wasn't he the first man? My father, Morrison Chief, told me about him. But he never told me what Weismann means."

"It means 'wise man.'" Then, with a frank sincerity she could not resent, "I'd like to know what Dian means, too."

"It is our word for queen. My mother and my grandmother, and all the others who stood in this place, beside the First Fire—back to our first mother the Moon—were called Dian. We have our own names too—mine is Chulee." She paused, and looked at him curiously. "How did you come here, Adam? How did you get through the Ice to find us? Did Hull bring you?"

He told her briefly of the journey, omitting, of course, its real purpose. Hull was dead, he said.

"It is no matter," was the seeming-calloused answer. "He would have been driven to the Ice, or taken to *Maun ig Mere*, if Morrison Chief had not defended him. But he was allowed to stay, and became the father of two of the *Ug Puddrin*. But Morrison Chief, he was the father of Dian. He was tall like you, and his hair was yellow and his eyes blue like yours." Now she turned to Belgrade and her manner was less free. "Are you his servant?"

"His servant? Dian, I am Karl Belgrade, the anthropologist. But of course that means nothing to you."

"You are tall and strong, but so dark. Your eyes are black as our winter night, when neither my Father nor my Mother is in the sky, and my power declines. You may both go to the Rest-House, where the hunters from other villages stay when they come for the summer prayers to Dian. I will tell the people who you are, and of the ship on the sea."

She turned to her people and raised her hand. Instantly they rose to their feet; the braves held their lamps high. She spoke to them briefly in their own tongue. Then she gave her hand to each of her guests in turn.

Adam shook it warmly, in American fashion. Belgrade, of the European tradition, of course bowed and touched the cool fingers to his lips. She seemed somewhat taken aback—this was evidently a form of homage new to her—and turned questioning eyes into Adam's face. "You did not do so. Why is your friendship sign different from his? You clasped my hand

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like a chief." But at once her face brightened as she drew her own conclusions. "Dian understands. You are a chief in your own land. He is *Ug Paddrin.*"

"*Ug Paddrin,* Dian?" Belgrade echoed, puzzled.

"It is your caste with us," was the grave answer. "You are not blond enough. Perhaps it does not matter beyond the Ice, so Morrison Chief told, but we have our own ways here."

A moment later Gort-Chil escorted the visitors out of the temple, and into a fifty-foot tunnel nearby. Adam crawled through a round aperture, curtained by a thick pelt, and found himself in a circular room, evidently the guest house of the village. Dazed by the revelations of the last hour, at first he paid little attention to his surroundings. But when he and Belgrade were left alone, his senses sharpened. He noticed first that the inner walls of the turf-house had been plastered with clay, hard as rock, and were bare save for a number of weapons hung on wooden pegs. Later he would examine these with scientific care; now he was absorbed in his companion.

The Slav was kneeling on the floor, fondling a number of rich fur rugs. His eyes were luminous; his hands left lustrous prints in the velvet nap. "Think of walking on such beauty, such wealth," he murmured. "Weismann, have you ever seen furs like these?"

"Can't say that I have. The silver ones have the color and texture of silver fox, except that they are too large. The brown ones look like sea-otter. They must represent new species of animals."

"New species of familiar genera. I'll tell you something else they represent—a large sum of money. The whole village is a treasure house of fur. And that means—good-by to these people."

"I don't understand—"

"It seems to be obvious. You must know what happens to any primitive people who possess riches. Remember the Incas and the Aztecs. Weismann, you are in a primitive village untouched by civilization. Come back in a year, two years at the latest, and see the change."

"You mean"—Adam groped for words to express the appalling thought—"you mean that this wonderful race is doomed?"

"Of course. Don't be a sentimental fool. It is interesting as a scientific curiosity, and will figure in museums all over the world, but it hasn't a dog's chance to survive in competition with Europeans. The white man, so-called, destroys every primitive race he sees, some quickly, others slowly. In this case, destruction will come like an avalanche, almost in a day. If they but knew it, our visit here is their death-sentence. It is the same as though we brought an army to clean them out. As soon as we report our discovery, scores of adventurers will come here. They'll take not only their furs and ivory, and what little gold they possess, but their virtue and independence. They'll leave instead all the curses of civilization—bad habits, love of luxury, and disease."

"But surely they can be protected—"

"Rubbish, Weismann. These people will have no resistance against the diseases of civilization. But they'd starve to death anyway, in time. We'll kill off their animals for fur; there will be a trading store on this very site."

"IT'S a fine prospect." Adam spoke bitterly. "It's a fine trick we are playing them."

"Don't distress yourself about it. We found them before too late. I'll make complete reports of them and what happens to them after we leave won't really matter

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to science. If the museums send expeditions within the next year or two they'll be able to make good enough collections of their implements, and so on, before the traders carry off everything."

"You speak as if science is the only thing that matters."

"I urge you again, Weismann—do not be a sentimental fool. These people are savages. After we leave, they will have nothing to contribute to the world except a few bones, flints, and bronze tools. It is a natural law that the weak must perish and the strong survive."

"We ought to be strong enough to temper that law a little, I think. If our civilization can't grant a little mercy to the weak, I don't think it's much good. And we'll come to it, in time. We've already begun to set aside sanctuaries for helpless animals and birds. If this discovery were postponed for twenty years, I think these people would be protected. Humanitarianism is advancing fast; twenty years from now human beings may be decent enough, yes, and wise enough too, to make a sanctuary here, and preserve this wonderful thing for future generations, as it should be."

"If this discovery were postponed for twenty years, some scientific man other than myself would be the discoverer, and steal the honor I have won. As it is, twenty years will see these people as near extinction as the Maoris of New Zealand. The only survivors will be a few half-breeds, begging for sugar at the trading post. And speaking of the future, we have our own safety to look to. The plane is fairly secure, in that closed bay, but a hard wind would smash it up; then we would be extinct ourselves, figuratively speaking. We must send for it, and have it towed into the village."

Adam seemed to arouse himself with difficulty from his brooding. "I'll ask Dian to send a dozen men in kayaks. They can put their buckskin lines on the plane, and tow her into the river mouth in half a day."

"She'll do it for you. She seemed rather pleased with you, anyway. And that brings me to a rather delicate point."

Belgrade straightened, and looked his companion in the eye. His gaze was cold, utterly insolent, but Adam returned it with considerable spirit. "Yes?"

"I am the head of this expedition. I do not often remind you of this fact, but it is nevertheless so."

"Go on," Adam urged coldly.

"In that capacity, I'll have to ask you to hold off on certain pleasurable pursuits that may occur to you. I refer particularly to the girl, Dian. I am interested in her, in a scientific way, and wish to test her reactions. To do so, I must have a clear field. Is that understood?"

Adam studied the sallow face before him. "I don't believe it is," he observed at last, calmly as he could.

"I don't want to deprive you of anything, Weismann, and mean that you shall have your full share of pleasure as well as profit, from this expedition. But you must respect my wishes, in this case. The girl, you must recognize, is taboo."

Adam turned slowly livid. He could think of no answer other than violence; the muscles of his big arms began to contract into stony hills. But before he could make that answer, thereby hurling to a climax his growing feud with Belgrade, there came a prosaic interruption. Jim-Hull appeared in the aperture with a tray of food.

CHAPTER III

THE HORROR OF THE CAVE

BELGRADE'S machine-like brain and body needed fuel, and he rubbed his hands with satisfaction. Tucking his feet under him, he sat supplely on the floor; Adam stifled his anger the best he could and sat down opposite. Jim-Hull placed the food between them.

The tray seemed to be of hammered copper. The food was of a variety and excellence amazing to the visitors. Naturally, the body of the meal was meat, some of it broiled over coals, some fried in fat. There was a heavy black flesh which Adam thought must be whale; it was strong but not offensive to a healthy man's appetite. Another meat tasted like venison. A third was certainly a rich-fleshed water bird, perhaps wild goose, more likely penguin.

There were small hard-baked loaves of bread, rich, nutty, and faintly sweet. Of course they could not be made of grain; not even rye could ripen in this climate. Adam decided they were the product of some sweet water-root, similar to the wokas plant used by Canadian Indians. Hot milk was served as a drink; a rich, rather strong milk that might be reindeer, but was probably of a kind unknown to the husbandry of other lands.

Belgrade ate swiftly, efficiently, just as though he were stoking a furnace. Mean-

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while he chatted with Jim-Hull, and soon maneuvered an invitation to spend the night in his igloo. Plainly he wanted to study the half-breed's family life, and to question him regarding matters of scientific interest. Adam was not included in the invitation, but he realized it was through no breach of hospitality—as far as Jim-Hull was concerned the American was taboo. In the primitive society of the Antarcticans, the caste known as *Ug Paddrin* could not make free with the Hunters, who worshipped within the temple, and Adam was accepted in the latter class. Belgrade, however, did not qualify. Evidently he was too dark to fulfill the tribe's eugenic ideal. He also was *Ug Paddrin*.

Adam could now understand why the elder Hull had been driven from the tribe. He had a congenital defect which the people despised and feared. To let him mix his blood with that of the select was a violation of some ancient law preserving the physical standards of the tribe.

Adam was tired, but he could not sleep until he had examined the weapons on the wall. One, a lance made of a stick of driftwood tipped with a bronze point, was unusual only on account of its great weight. It was twice as heavy as any javelin Adam had ever seen, and was far too long for a man of ordinary height. The bow, on the other hand, was a supreme example of the fletcher's art. Adam's eyes glistened as he took it from the wall.

He had loved archery fondly and long. Although he was not an expert shot, he knew the feel of a good bow, and outside of a museum, he had never seen one he could not shoot. But as he examined this marvelous piece of primitive artillery, he believed he had met his match.

It was the bow of Ulysses. In the first place, it was not a ewe stave, like most American bows, but a composition of whale-bone, sinew, horn, and driftwood. It was comparatively short—only four feet—yet it drew over eighty pounds. He fitted the string, took an arrow from the quiver and nocked, and put his body into the draw. Slowly he forced the tip clear to the handle.

Greatly pleased, he eased the bow without releasing the shaft. He had never seen one that handled better; in the excitement of the hunt he could shoot it with deadly force. It was of antique style—the Turks had carried similar artillery in their wars with the Crusaders. Where had the Antarcticans learned such bower art? When he could explain this, he would be able to solve the mystery of their origin and their race.

Lying down among the fur robes, he tried to sleep. The excitement of the day made his brain whirl, but at last he relaxed, and wakened only when Jim-Hull entered the igloo with another platter of food. Dian had sent for Adam, and he was to go to her igloo as soon as he had eaten.

Jim-Hull led him to a large dome-shaped turf house adjoining the temple. He entered the dark passage alone, and a girl's voice called cheerily to him from beyond the aperture. He crawled through with all the dignity he could muster, to find Dian sitting cross-legged on a fur rug, eating wokas bread and milk with obvious relish.

They were alone. Instantly he felt her warm magnetism, an emanation from the splendid, beautiful, vital body half-concealed by her fur garment. Today her hair was coiled about her head. Her oval face was flushed, her eyes brilliant, her full lips curled in a smile at once childlike and seductive.

She made a barbaric picture. She had added a broad bracelet on each wrist, and a brilliant red stone, evidently a garnet, was fastened in her hair. The frame setting her off was all she could desire. There is nothing so barbarously beautiful as fine furs, and these surrounded her with a profusion of richness that almost took Adam's breath. She was seated on a glossy pile against which her white flesh fairly gleamed. In one corner was a pallet heaped with pelts; others covered the floors and hung about the walls.

Thin white skins, like fine chamois, oiled until they were translucent, covered the window openings. The light that filtered through brought out all the gloss of the furs, and accentuated the depth and richness of their shadows.

THE girl motioned to Adam to sit beside her. "I could hardly wait for your sleep to end," she told him. "I wanted to see your face again, and hear from your own lips about the ship that flies in the air. I have already sent for that ship. Gort-Chil—that is Big Seal, my cousin—has taken ten men in boats to tow it into the river mouth, and it will come before the sun gets half-way round." Her voice lowered, and she spoke passionately. "You should be thankful that Dian wanted to see this wonder. Otherwise she might have told Gort-Chil to break its wings with his ax, and let it sink into the sea."

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She was so deeply in earnest that Adam was dumfounded. "Why would you want to do that?"

"So you could not fly away soon. Then the Long Dark would come and pass many times before you found the way through the Ice."

"But why do you want me to stay, Dian? For all you know, I may be an enemy."

"Why do I want you to stay? Because you can talk my father's talk. You can tell me about the great world, the cities that have grown where our forests used to stand, the people that have come since our people died."

Adam did not fully understand her, but decided that she must be referring to various legends of her tribe. "Would you like to go to that great world, Dian?"

The girl looked startled, then slowly shook her head. "They would not know me there. I alone would know that I am Dian, the daughter of the Sun and the Moon, the bringer of fat buffalo, and the beloved of the seal on the ice and the fish in the sea. Besides, I would miss so much that I love."

"The terrible cold? The long dark?"

She laughed like a child. "The cold? When the oil lamps burn in the crowded room I often want to throw off my fur garment—and that is taboo for me, Dian. The Long Dark is sad, but we tell stories in the temple, and the chills go up and down our backs to hear the Giant Buffalo stamping on the roof. No, I will never go away. The ice would rise and cover the villages, if the daughter of the Sun and Moon forsook her people. And I love the blessings and the gifts of the hunters, after the great kill, and the returning geese in the sky, and the spring festival to my father the Sun, and the good milk and sweet-root bread."

Adam looked into the blue deep of her eyes. "Perhaps you are afraid, too. Are you, Dian?"

"The old men say that we are the last of the People. They mean—of our people. The others are all dead, or else we would have heard from them, messages cut in sticks, and gifts of pelts. We can live only here, behind the Ice. We would die, too, if we tried to go beyond." She paused, smiling frankly. "So if we are to talk together and be friends, you must stay here."

"If you want me to stay, as you say you do, why don't you just command me to? You are Dian."

She turned to him proudly, with fine, simple dignity. "I would not want you to stay against your will. Dian does not have to command her friends. Besides, when you are ready to go, perhaps I shall be ready to have you go. I have not yet seen a man that I thought—I knew—I wanted to keep always."

To relieve the momentary strain, she began to tell him the customs of the people. It appeared that she was not an absolute monarch; the elders of the tribe possessed certain rights from time immemorial. Adam's truth-seeking mind found this of absorbing interest: here, perhaps, were the beginnings of the power-checks on which modern governments are based. The Antarcticans had learned, in the long centuries, that no hereditary monarch, even of divine ancestry, must be trusted too far. They must have means to overrule her, provided she oppressed them too heavily. In this case the checks on her power took a most novel form.

"I am the daughter of the Sun and the Moon," she said. "When either the Sun or the Moon is in the sky, no one may disobey me, or question my law. This means that for four months in the summer I am supreme, with only short occasional breaks in the spring and fall. In the winter, when the Sun sleeps, my mother the Moon rises and stands guard for many days at a time. We know her seasons, and even though the sky is full of cloud, and the blizzards lock us within the dwellings, we know she is there. In the days between when she is with my Father within the House of the West, the hunters of the tribe may put aside my decrees."

"Have they power to put you aside, and raise another Dian in your place?"

She seemed bewildered by this question. "*I* am Dian," she told him solemnly. "There is no other. I am the daughter of the Sun and the Moon, and if they brought harm to me, the ice would rise and cover the villages. But they can make me divorce my mate, and choose another."

"Why would they do that?"

"The man Dian chooses for her husband must be a strong man, skillful, and a brave fighter when the bear comes to bay in the cave. He must also be wise, to lead the men in their councils. He is the chief. If Dian does not choose such a man, but a coward and a teller of foolish lies, the hunters may require—some night when the moon is hidden—that Dian divorce that husband. This is a great shame. So Dian must think a long time before she decides."

"But you can choose again?"

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"As many times as I like. I could choose a new mate every year, and put aside the old one, if it were for the good of the people. But they fare better if one chief holds power many years."

Adam reached for her hand, and held it between both his own. It was a strong hand, but well-formed, smooth, long-fingered and not too large.

"If you wanted to, could you choose me, Dian?"

"*If I wanted to,*" she echoed, smiling. "If I thought you would be acceptable to the people, as well as to me, I could choose you even for the little time that you are here. I have not yet chosen a mate. The hunters have petitioned me, and the old men have advised, because they say that youth is the time for marrying, the time for bringing to life another Dian. One who is tall, who herself can be the mother of queens and hunters, who is fit to sit beside the First Fire in the temple in the long years that are to come."

WHAT was behind the temple rites? Evidently a deep religious feeling. The Antarctians worshipped God in his visible forms, particularly the sun whose bright face made the snow melt into silver rivers, revealing the good moss beneath, and the moon that lighted their pathway in the Long Dark of winter. Dian was the living symbol of these two sacred beings, the Sun and the Moon; their far removed offspring and hereditary priestess. As such, she was considered herself semi-divine. She also might be regarded as the earthly fountain of life, the mother of warriors.

Adam already knew that her people pursued physical perfection. She explained that this love of human symmetry and beauty was no mere tribal whim, but a national ideal that they followed literally to the death. It dominated their lives and was the central theme of their social organization. Like all great ideals, it was rooted in common sense. The Antarcticans lived in a hostile climate. For eight months each year their world was a horrible desert of ice and snow. Cold to freeze the eyeballs, blizzards raving across the darkened frozen seas, blinding clouds of snow-dust, and the gray wastes stretching forever in the weird gleam of the Southern Lights—this was their winter home. Even in summer they could raise no crops. Their only husbandry was the herding of an undersized buffalo, an unknown species resembling the Arctic musk-ox. Thus they were able to exist only by eternal war with the wilderness. To wage this war they must breed a race of giants.

They were not content to exist like Eskimos in a similar environment—on rotten whale blubber and seal oil in dark, foul huts. They wanted the best that their country afforded—a variegated diet, beautiful furs to wear and to decorate their houses, gold and silver ornaments, good tools of bronze. To win these prizes they must hunt far and wide, climb the mountains and battle the rivers, stalk the horned game on the tundra and fight the bear in his cave. There was no place in their tribe for weaklings. Every man must be sufficiently strong, skillful, and intelligent to do his full share of the work and contribute to the general welfare; every woman must be able to raise children.

If a man grew up somewhat below the tribal standard, or differed too much in complexion and appearance from the accepted racial type, he was *Ug Paddrin*—an inferior caste which performed the menial work of the tribe.

If a baby was born with any serious defect, it was taken to a mysterious cavern known as *Maun ig Mere*. This custom was

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rigidly adhered to; more than once in the tribal history the queen's own daughter had thus disappeared. Yet the practice, if barbarous, achieved striking results. The braves were the finest specimens of manhood Adam had ever seen; of superb uniform stature and muscular development, clean-cut, clear-eyed, and free from disease. In a more genial country, where life was not so hard, they could no doubt achieve a superior civilization.

The women, although somewhat heavier than European women, had a wild beauty which Adam felt keenly. They were full-throated, deep-bosomed, strong-thighed; their hair was uniformly gold, their eyes vividly blue, their teeth white and sound. Dian herself was the perfect flower grown by this ruthless weeding. The queens from which she sprang had mated with the pick of the tribe.

Not only infants went to *Maun ig Mere*. If a man were disabled by accident or disease, it was not long before he disappeared. And it was a startling and sinister fact that there were no people of extreme senility to be found in the village. If they were too old to work or to take their place in the councils, they did not remain.

Adam was horrified at this. "It may be necessary, but it certainly is merciless," he said. "Where old and disabled people are the victims, it's downright cruel."

Dian gazed at him in astonishment. "I've never known my people to do a cruel act to one of their number," she answered. "The old and sick people beg to be taken to the Cave."

"Then it's because they feel they are a burden to the tribe. They suffer just the same."

"They don't suffer at all. They go to sleep. And they want to go not because they are a burden to the people, but a burden to themselves. What man would stay here when he could no longer shoot the arrow and throw the spear, or paint the pictures in the caverns, or race his boat with the others in the river, or have sons? What woman would hang on, like a broken bird's nest on the cliff, when she can no longer go with her sisters to milk the buffalo, or listen to the stories in the temple in the long nights, or laugh with her friends while we wait for the hunters to return?

"Often old people ask to go before we are ready to let them. Sometimes when they are too blind to see the blue sky, too deaf to hear the geese honk overhead, and when every day seems a year of death, we still make them stay on, just because we love them, or perhaps because their wisdom is needed in the councils. *That* is the only cruelty."

"Then your people must regard death differently than we do."

"When we die, we go to the gods. There is good h u n t i n g—rich eating—warm weather. This life is good, but that is better. You see—we are not Christians."

"That doesn't entirely explain it. We also believe in a happy After-Life, but few people are in a hurry to get there. Well, what might seem wrong to us, under our conditions of life, may be all right for you."

As to this, Dian explained that the Antarcticans had no inflexible code of morals. Certain things were forbidden, but unlike most primitive people they were not bound round with an intricate system of taboo, the meaning of which was lost in forgotten ages. What made for the welfare of the people was good; what hurt the tribe was bad. They practised monogamy because it was a good economic arrangement, and permitted every man to have a mate.

Stealing had been taboo for so many centuries that it had ceased to exist, and the word had disappeared from the language. Like the Arctic Eskimos, they simply did not know how to steal. Probably this was a law imposed by the Great Cold; a lesson of mutual protection learned from the harsh environment in which they lived. If a man stole from a fellow's cache, sometimes his own cache would be rifled, and there would come an hour, in the white silence and solitude, that he would pay the extreme penalty.

Gambling was forbidden. They knew, without knowing how they knew, that it was bad for the loser materially, worse for the winner psychologically, and was a loss of time that the tribe could not afford. If a man killed another, for any cause other than self-defense, he was sent to *Maun ig Mere*. But this was not punishment—curiously enough, there was no word for punishment in the Antarctic language—but merely a matter of the preservation of the tribe. From this law there was no appeal.

Apparently their ideals and codes of conduct were not borrowed from other cultures, but were based on experience ages long. Adam began to realize that they could not be a stray tribe from some contemporary race, but a race to themselves, unimaginably ancient.

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Who were these wonderful people? Where had they come from, and how, and when?

It was hardly possible that the Antarcticans had borrowed from the Latin. It seemed far more likely that the Romans and Greeks had themselves borrowed from a language already inconceivably ancient; the same language that Dian had spoken the previous day in the temple.

Maun was the Antarctic word for cave. It was strikingly similar to *maw,* an ancient English word. *Mere,* the Antarctic word meaning death, was the root of the Latin *mort,* and meant literally a dead or waste place. Dian was the goddess of the moon; it was also the Antarctic word for the moon's legendary daughter. *Gort,* meaning big, was somewhat like the English word great, and almost identical with gert, a dialect word of the same meaning used in Devonshire. Finally, *chil* was similar to or identical with an ancient Scandinavian word meaning seal.

BUT this only deepened the mystery. The Antarcticans must have been exiled in the Cold South for literally thousands of years; how, then, could their language be related not to one European tongue, but to all? Plainly they were the last of a great people once distributed throughout the world. They had lived in Europe "when the reindeer roared where Paris roars tonight," and they had wandered to the Far South ages ago, when the Antarctic Continent was united with South Africa and South America in the form of an immense horseshoe, and when it had a more favorable climate. And now Adam knew he was on the right track. He was thunderstruck by the dawning truth. The short hairs stood up and prickled on the back of his neck.

"Dian, a few minutes ago you spoke about the men painting pictures in caves," he asked breathlessly; "when can I see some of these pictures?"

"Now, if you like; Dian will take you. Almost every cave is full of them, and the people who go to see come out with eyes round as milk-cups."

"Do all the men paint pictures?"

"No, just one caste—you would call it the artist caste—who are next to Dian in greatness and power. There are only five in all the villages, and when one dies, all the people mourn. Almost any woman can bear a hunter, a boatman, a fisherman, but only one woman in many hundreds can give us a picture-maker."

"And you've always had this artist caste?"

"Always. Even before the ice, when this land grew pointed trees with leaves green all year. Even then the artists painted pictures in caves, and the people went to marvel. Good meat is food for the mouth, but the pictures are food for the eyes, the heart."

Oblivious to the chill weather, and without the slightest ceremony, she took his hand and led him out of the igloo down the village street. Her people greeted her with a gesture wonderfully dignified and noble—a lifting of the right arm, hand open and raised, as if they would call down the blessing of heaven upon her head; this she answered by a smile and a nod.

She led the way to a low rocky hill, just back of the beach, and into the black mouth of a cave.

An oil lamp, carved of ivory or bone, burned in a niche in the wall—always lighted, apparently, for sightseers; Dian carried it into the black depth of the cavern. Adam would never forget this scene—the shadows rolling away in front, the flickering light dancing on the walls, the girl's yellow hair and white limbs and her gold bands showing red as blood. In an inner chamber she stopped and held the light high.

Adam's eyes, like the tribesmen's, were round with wonder. The walls and ceiling were alive and breathing with animal paintings. And this was no childish drawing such as most primitive people essay, but a superb art expressing a noble, high intelligence.

The artists had caught the vigor and wild freedom of their animal neighbors. The draftmanship was faulty, the mineral pigment an imperfect medium, yet the wolves looked as though they could raise their muzzles and howl; the buffaloes were moving, dark, majestic figures, across the lonely wastes; the bears were poised to charge.

The scientific man that was Doctor Weismann reveled in the historical significance of the pictures—the link between the present and the immemorial past—but the youth, the hunter, the adventurer who was Adam thrilled to the pictures themselves with a boy's love.

There is only one race known to history that could paint pictures like these. Their mammoths, their wild horses, and their reindeer are still to be seen, undimmed by the centuries, in the caves of Dordogne,

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France, and in the Pyrenees. Who were these wonderful people, the Antarcticans? They were the last of the Cro-Magnons, aptly called the Greeks of the Old Stone Age, that wonderful race of artists and hunters whose natural gifts were as rich as any civilized race of today, who lived and had their being and painted their pictures two hundred centuries before the first Egyptian Pharaoh dreamed of a pyramid to hide his bones, and who disappeared from the world stage fifteen thousand years before Christ.

THE magnitude of this discovery overpowered Adam. To contemplate it and to figure its effect on his own affairs required time and leisure. For the present he was content to lose himself in the adventure, to gape at the pictures, and to walk beside a Cro-Magnon princess three hundred centuries after her time. Dazed, he let her lead him out of the cave, on to the sunlit beach.

"There are other caves, further down," she told him. "Some of them have pictures of elephants in them."

This fact did not astonish him. The caves of Dordogne contained many such pictures; the early Cro-Magnons lived and strove with elephants. He hastily assumed that the Antarctic branch of the race either had kept alive a legend of the hairy monsters, or else their pictures were thousands of years old. He asked to visit the cave.

"I will take you there, and perhaps you will get a chance to see how pictures are made. My own cousin, my mother's brother's son, is foremost of the artist caste, and he is making pictures in one of the sea caves today. His name is Blut-Bal —it means Red Buffalo." (*Blut*: blood. *Bal*: Bull?)

But they were not to pass the time so pleasantly. Without warning they were precipitated into a drama wholly in keeping with this wild sea-scene and the untamed outdoor life of the Cro-Magnons. As they were passing a narrow strip of beach between towering cliffs and the surf, a blast of sound burst upon their ears.

It bellowed forth from one of the caves in the base of the cliff, the black mouth of rock acting as a megaphone. Shocked by the uproar, at first Adam could not imagine what it was. He only knew that it called up, from some old cellar of experience lying under his conscious brain, ghosts of primal terror which he had supposed civilization had forgotten.

But Dian knew well enough. "Yore!" she cried, her face white as the sea-foam on the sand. "Run, run—it is *Yore*."

And now his stunned brain moved, and he too recognized the general nature of the sound. It was the roar of an animal, the ferocious half-snarl, half-bay of a large carnivore. What else could he expect, in this wild-beast land? It undulated in the cave, and shook the air outside. The fury and violence of the sound told plainly that the brute was either charging or in the act of killing his prey.

But Adam could not heed Dian's cry. He was not given the alternative of flight. Just as he was about to take to his heels, another cry from another source, shot like a rocket out of the cave.

It was not so loud as the beast's roars, but it cut through them, shrill, sharp, and arresting. Adam instantly recognized it as a human voice, the voice of a fellow man in mortal terror. That he must answer it, the best he could, was not merely the obligation of his manhood, but instinct so sure and deep that it moved without any conscious act of his will. If this were not so—if such an instinct did not exist—human beings would not have survived, and the beast would have conquered long ago.

The human cry had died in the air. It had ended in the middle of a tone, as if the breath behind it had been violently cut off. The animal sounds still continued, but had changed ominously in character. The long roar had given way to short, savage snarls, rapidly repeated, and indescribably ferocious, as if the animal had completed his charge and was now tearing its prey.

Somehow Adam got hold of his knife. He was not conscious of whipping his hand to his hip and sweeping the blade aloft, but Dian saw the act, and it left a picture in her memory that would never fade.

Instantly he plunged into the cave mouth.

He shouted as loud as he could, partly to frighten the animal, partly to enbolden himself, but now the shout froze in his mouth. It was if he had harked back thirty thousand years, to a drama of the Ice Age. In a niche in the wall a whale-oil lamp was burning. Blut-Bal, Dian's cousin, had placed it there to light the black walls which he meant to decorate, and now its yellow fitful gleam revealed a stranger picture than he could ever paint.

He lay on the cavern floor, his paint brush fallen from his hand. He was a strongly built youth, worthy to be kin to

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Dian, but his great strength and agility would not save him now. Standing over him, fiercely attacking him and in the act of crushing the bone of his left arm between white fangs, was a shaggy heavy-shouldered animal obviously of the bear family. No doubt, this was *Yore* (the word seemed to be related to *bjorn,* the Scandinavian word for bear) whose name Dian had cried in terror.

Yore was unlike any bear Adam had ever seen. He was colored like the blue bears of the Alaskan glaciers, but of an entirely different build. He had immensely powerful forequarters, but his loins were comparatively weak. His fish-shaped head and big paws suggested the polar bears, but he was not so large as the monarchs of the Arctic floes, and was nearer the size of the American black bears.

If Adam could have taken time to study the animal, he would have recognized a new species, as far as the world knew, of water bear. Probably it denned in the caves beside the sea, and lived principally on seals. No doubt it was first cousin to the cave bears of prehistoric Europe—those ferocious beasts whose skeletons lie close to the broken bones of the Stone Age men, witnessing the forgotten battles of two hundred centuries gone. This particuar animal had laired in the further recesses of the cave, and wakening from his sleep, had attacked Blut-Bal unawares. The man had attempted to flee, but Yore had overtaken him, perhaps crushed his skull, and now was demolishing him with all the horrible frenzy of the ursine breed.

But Adam had no time for scientific observations. All he saw was the Beast rampant upon the body of Man. With a shout that simulated far more courage than he possessed, he raised his knife and charged.

He was not consciously brave. Indeed, he was terrified to the marrow of his bones; such a hand-to-hand fight would be bad enough in the open air, and much worse in this dark cavern, where the shadows danced and snatched at him with black hands. His superior civilization and scientifically trained mind were of no comfort or help. He quaked like the flint men in silurian caves, or like his yellow-haired ancestors in the forests of Ancient Germany. But again like these barbarians, he could not turn aside. He could not think rationally on the matter, conclude that his life was worth more than this pagan artist's, and save himself. The basic instincts of his breed hurled him on.

The bear's roving eye took in this new enemy. He raised his head, his lips drew in a snarl, and with a roar that made the cavern ring, he charged. Yet this new turn of the battle probably saved Adam's life. If he had plunged on, Yore would have stood up to meet him, and broken his knife arm, and probably his back as well, with one blow of his paw. Armed with such a short blade, Adam had small chance of avoiding the horned mauls. But now there was no need to push the attack, because the bear had turned the tables.

SEEING that the animal had forgotten his first victim, Adam turned to run. It was at least possbile that Yore would follow him into the open and make off. But in bear fashion, he took two leaps toward Adam, paused, and looked back at his helpless prey. Possibly he was considering whether he should return to the body and further vent his rage upon it; perhaps he was uneasy to find himself between two enemies.

At this instant, Adam saw a spear leaning against the cavern walls. Blut-Bal had no doubt set it there when he went to his painting. No object Adam had ever seen

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was such a joy to his eyes. It was merely a native lance, a shaft of wood tipped with a bronze point, but that point was almost needle-sharp, and the shaft, heavy and strong, added five feet to his reach. With this he could stab the animal's body and still remain beyond the sweep of those terrible hairy arms. The odds still might be in his enemy's favor, but at least he had a fighting chance.

He snatched up the spear and menaced his enemy. He made no attempt to hurl it —this was out of his line—nor did he hold it aloft, like a javelin; rather he handled it as though it were a rifle tipped with a bayonet. And now he was on sure ground. A scene of ten years before—an army camp in southern sand, and a straw dummy hanging on a rope—flashed briefly before his memory's eye. He knew how to wield a blade at the end of a stick! The admonitions of a hard-voiced sergeant rang in his ear, and a well-learned lore came back to him afresh.

Now the bear was moving back toward his first victim, and there was no more time to lose. With one deliberate blow he could break Blut-Bal's body in two. Suddenly a red glare came before Adam's eyes, and he went berserk. He forgot caution, he almost forgot fear, and remembered naught but rage and hate; primal emotions ancient as this cavern. He cared little now for Blut-Bal's life: his only desire was to sink his spear in his foe's flesh.

Holding the spear in both hands, like a bayonet, he lunged on. He shouted as he came, hoarsely and horribly, just as he had learned to do twelve years before. And the look of him—lance pointing, eyes glaring, mouth open wide and yelling, powerful arms menacing—was more than Yore could stand. He was only the Beast, and this was Man.

He was no rifle-tamed cub of a National Park, but a cave-bear of old, still striving for the mastery of an unconquered wilderness. He had not yet learned a horror of the human scent that would send his northern cousins scurrying to cover. Yet all his breed sensed darkly that the tide of dominion had turned, and the back of the Wild was broken. No doubt there would be many skirmishes in the future, but they must all lead to one end. It was best to avoid the two-legged foe, when he could. With a last menacing growl, he turned, sprang over Blut-Bal's body, and vanished into the further recesses of the cavern.

Adam made no effort to follow. He was only too glad to call the fight a draw.

Shaken by the aftermath of terror, he picked up Blut-Bal in his arms and ran out of the cavern. Just at the opening he met Dian, white as an ice-spirit. He realized, with a jubilant leap of his heart, that she had stayed with him to the last. She had not fled to safety, but had stood by, waiting for an opportunity to help, and yelling at the top of her voice.

Four fishermen had heard her, and were running over the dunes to their ruler's aid. The two ran to meet them, Adam still carrying the injured man, and not until the big Cro-Magnons closed round them did they shake off their terror of that gray demon in the cave. Then Adam laid his patient down on the sand and began to make a swift examination of his wounds.

Blut-Bal was not perfectly conscious, although suffering from loss of blood and severe shock. One arm was hopelessly mutilated, but he had rallied well, and if he could receive proper medical attention, his injuries were not necessarily mortal. This was the professional opinion of an experienced physician, and when Adam looked up at Dian, his eyes were alight with hope.

But Dian's eyes did not quicken to his. Her face was haggard with woe and horror. Plainly she had not waited his judgment, but had taken her own: she was ready to sing the death-song, to paint the victim's body, and to bury him, crowned by perforated shells, his weapons and food by his side, after the immemorial custom of the Cro-Magnons. Her tribesmen had likewise given him up; their faces were grim and white. As far as they knew, or tribal experience revealed, Blut-Bal was doomed.

The woe in Dian's face touched Adam deeply. "Don't take it so hard," he urged. "He may come through all right."

"He is gone," she answered brokenly. "He will make no more pictures to gladden our hearts. He must go to *Maun ig Mere.*"

The pity in Adam's face gave way to cold rage. To send this youth to the mysterious, sinister cavern whose very name chilled a man's heart like the South wind, seemed to Adam not merely barbarous, but inhumanly cruel. Besides, his life-saving instincts rebelled against such a brutal waste. He was glad that Dian at least had the grace to weep.

"Do you mean you're going to kill him just because he's been mutilated and can't do his full amount of work?" Adam asked.

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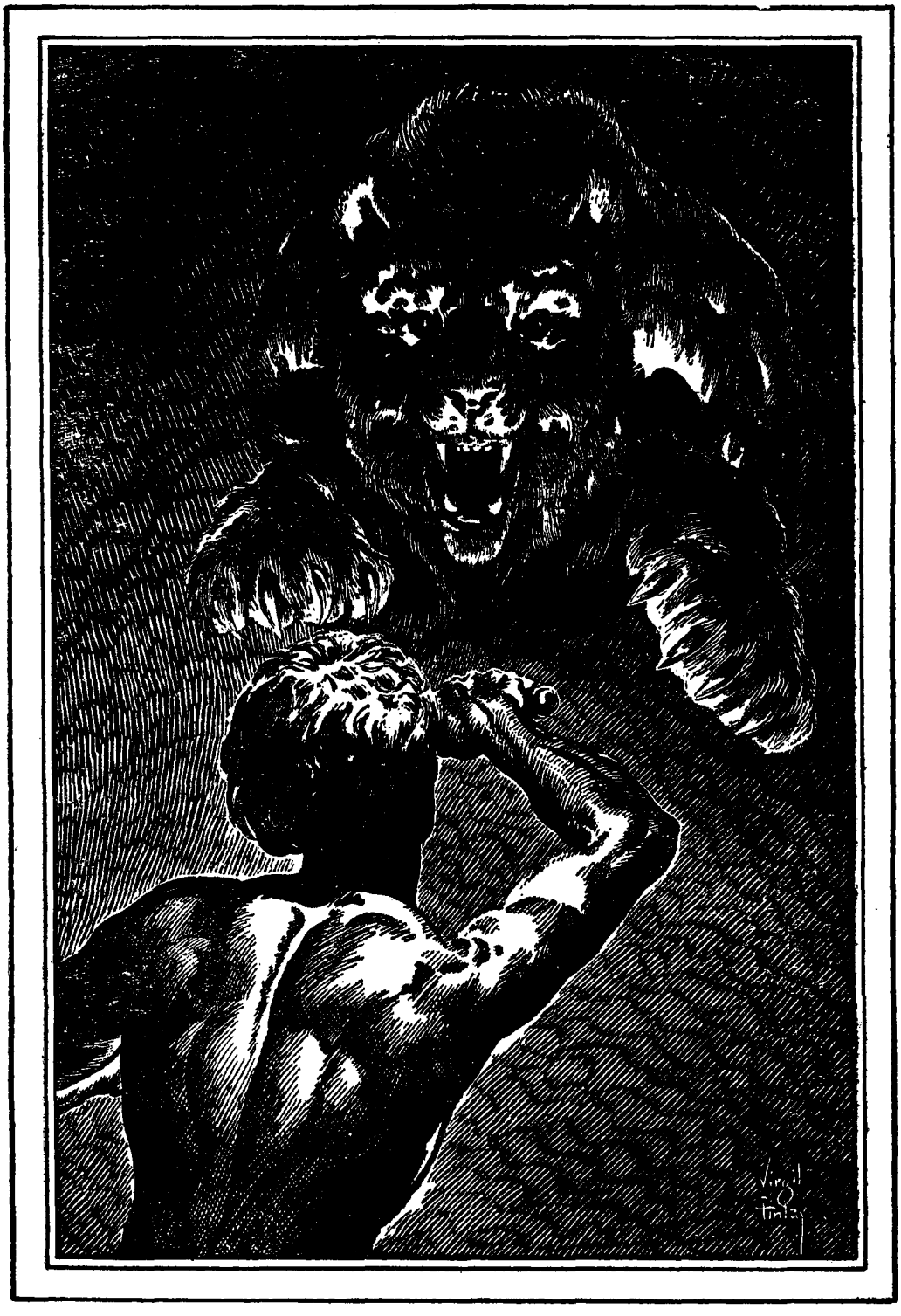

With a roar that made the cavern ring, the bear charged. . . .

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Only her grief, filling her cup so full that no room was left for anger, saved Adam from serious trouble. It was not fitting that the daughter of the Sun and the Moon should be addressed in this manner. Her tribesmen could not follow the words, but they kenned the tone, and their brows lowered, and their hands moved slowly, ominously toward their weapons. But the girl's pride had taken no hurt.

"You don't understand," she told him gently. "I would pray all night in the temple, and give my gold bracelets as a sacrifice to the Sun, if Blut-Bal could live. Only his left arm is crushed, not his right. He could still make pictures for the people's joy. But he will die. The poison will come into his arm and his other wounds, and creep through his body. We have seen it before, when the flesh is torn and the bones crushed by Yore's fangs.

"In three days, four days, perhaps five, he will beg to be taken to *Maun ig Mere*. And we will take him there, because we know he will die anyway, and we cannot bear his pain."

Adam's pale face slowly flushed. A high, solemn exaltation, such as he had known only in rare moments never forgotten, thrilled his heart and kindled his eyes. Not for the first time in his life, but one of the few times, he literally thanked God that he was a doctor.

"But he needn't die," he said earnestly. "I can bring him through, if he's brave enough. Dian, I am a medicine-man—I know how to stop the poison that spreads from his wounds—but I can do nothing unless Blut-Bal will help me. Can he bear pain—great pain?"

The pride in the girl's face, the noble lifting of her eyes to his, and the luster in her eyes, made this moment one of the most poignant in Adam's life. "Can he bear pain?" she echoed. "A man of our men, and a worshipper in the temple? Is he a child, or a dog to whine when he is beaten? Even the *Ug Paddrin* know how to bear pain, and Blut-Bal is of the caste next to me, Dian. Do you know what my people call themselves? The Last of the Men."

THE fishermen who stood about her caught the earnestness of her tone, and questioned among themselves. Quickly she appealed to them, speaking in the Cro-Magnon tongue. Meanwhile Adam watched their faces, and the pride and valor and simple dignity that he saw there, when they understood the situation, stirred him profoundly. They answered almost in one voice.

"They say that he is Blut-Bal, the maker of pictures," Dian translated. "They say he is of the Temple, and of the Men. They don't need to say any more."

So Adam delayed no further. Quickly he gave directions for Blut-Bal to be carried to the guest house. Here the walls were bare plaster, and therefore cleaner than the fur-draped walls of Dian's own igloo. Swift boats were sent to meet the party of men towing in the disabled seaplane, with instructions to procure Adam's medical bag and rush it back to the village. Meanwhile he prepared an operating table, rough but adequate, and with many a makeshift got together some sort of surgical outfit.

For assistants his first choice was Professor Belgrade, whose iron nerve could now be put to good use. The great Slav responded with warmth and earnestness quite in contrast to his usual cynicism, and his feud with Adam was momentarily forgotten. The doctor told him the names of the instruments, so that he could pass them in a split second, and he learned them on one telling.

Adam would need an interpreter, in case he should be obliged to address his patient, so he asked Dian herself to stand by. The girl seemed childishly pleased to have a share in the work.

Hands and equipment and surroundings were made sterile as possible by scrubbing and boiling. The injured man was brought in and laid on the table. Whatever fear moved in his heart, at the grim preparations, cast no reflection on his still, pale face. And now Adam, the adventurer, the spear-shaker, the bear-hunter, vanished from the room, and only Doctor Weismann, physician and surgeon, was left. Coldly, ruthlessly, methodically he went to work.

Not only Blut-Bal, the barbarian, was on trial that hour. Doctor Weismann, his nerve, will, and professional powers were tried as never before. It was bad enough to see the knives move through quivering sentient flesh, as Dian could attest, but it was worse to wield those knives. Weismann had never before performed major surgery on a conscious patient. He did not even have local anesthetic to soften the billows of pain sweeping the patient's body. Yet he never did better work. It was surgery at its best—a first rate performance from a surgeon's own view-

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point, a job he would like to show colleagues in future years.

He was oblivious to his surroundings. His hand was steady, sure, and strong; his orders to his assistants clear and precise. It was a splendid demonstration of Weismann's powers, yet he himself knew that a great part of the strength that steadied his hand and nerve, came from without. He not only had high professional traditions to inspire him, but also the high heart of his patient. Whatever else happened, he must keep faith with the faith and courage of Blut-Bal.

The man's strength in this trial shamed any weakness Weismann might have felt, and brought out the best that was in him. Blut-Bal lay motionless, as though he were completely anesthetized and the last reflex had died in his eyeballs. Wound after wound was cleansed, sterilized, and repaired, and finally the surgeon's blade emerged through the joint of his elbow, amputating his forearm; but although the cold sweat beaded all his body and his face was gray as ashes, he scorned to flinch or cry out.

He was a man of the Cro-Magnons. It was not fitting that he should show weakness before these visitors from beyond the ice. So he upheld not only his own barbarian honor, but the honor of his race, unquestionably one of the noblest races time has known. In his veins was the rich untainted blood of the First Men, from whose conquests all greatness began. He was one of the giants.

"In the name of the immortal truth," Belgrade whispered. "This savage is a man."

Now the work was done. Blut-Bal was left alone in the room, to gasp or faint or weep as his heart might desire. A few minutes later Adam and Dian stood again at the door of her igloo.

The girl gazed a long time over the sea. She was flushed, breathless; but her beauty was never so telling or her eyes so bright. The wild bud had begun to blossom, in this last hour. She seemed somehow ripened, less a child and more a woman. She was waking—stretching her arms—calling.

She did not now look so frankly into Adam's eyes. Embarrassed by his straight gaze, she began to talk hurriedly. "Do you think it possible that Blut-Bal will live?"

"There's no reason he shouldn't."

"It is a miracle. You must be one of the greatest men in the world."

He did not laugh at this extravagance—it was not amusing, on Dian's lips—but he did shake his head. "Not by any means. You must believe that, Dian; I don't want to go under false colors. There are thousands and thousands of greater men in our world, and at least a thousand greater doctors. Blut-Bal himself surpasses me in many ways. I couldn't do what he did today."

She was silent a long time. "I'll wait and see, and judge for myself. I think you are worthy to lead our people, and they will think so too, when they know you well. But I am proud of Blut-Bal, too. Do you know now whether my cousin—the picture-maker who stands next to Dian—can bear pain?"

"He's wonderful, Dian. All your people are wonderful. And that's not the only thing I know."

He spoke so solemnly, with such deep feeling, that she whirled to gaze into his face. "What is it?"

"I know that I'm going to try to preserve them against trouble. Whatever happens, I'm going to stand by them to the end."

CHAPTER IV

THE DOOM OF A RACE

WHEN the words were out of his mouth, Adam felt secret fear. A hard knot this, he had tied, virtually pledging his life to the Cro-Magnon people. The consequences of that pledge he could not yet foresee, but coming events cast ominous shadows before. Indeed he did not dare attempt to look into the future and contemplate the trouble he had invited.

If the affair could be settled in one desperate adventure, he could go through with it bravely enough. Like most men of his race, he could reach occasional peaks of sacrifice and even heroism, especially under the stimulus of great excitement. He was a choleric, two-fisted man, for all his cool scientific brain; and as thousands of his race had done before him, he could fight like a bulldog, literally to the death, for causes he did not wholly understand. But this might not be the price he must pay. The heroism required of him might be of a cold-blooded kind foreign to his temperament, and the sacrifice might not be met and quickly given, but life-long.

"I'm going to stand by your people to the end," he had said.

Dian turned quickly toward him, search-

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ing his face, but he dared not explain to her what he meant. Perhaps he was not ready to admit, even to himself, what he did mean. For the same reason he could not bear to consider ways and means; any plans he could make to silence Belgrade, keep secret his discoveries, and thus save the tribe, ended in the same brick wall of despair for himself.

When she asked if he would like to go with some of the tribesmen on a hunting trip, his face showed immense relief. It was an opportunity to postpone the dreaded issue; in fighting the wild beasts of the Moss Country he could forget, for a while, his fight with himself. At the same time he could watch and study the Cro-Magnon men, to determine whether their preservation was worth the price he must pay, or whether he could compromise at less cost to himself.

"I'd be delighted to go," he told Dian, "but you know I haven't any weapons."

"The men will give you a spear, or even a bow if you can handle it. But you must not be too brave, Tall One, even to win honor from the hunters. You must not run upon Zwei-Tag with a spear, as you ran upon Yore. I would not have you brought back to me with all your bones broken to little bits. You had better carry a bow, so you may shoot from a far distance; even though you cannot shoot straight enough to hit a mountain or the sky."

"I won't go fooling with any spears," Adam assured her. "I would much rather take a bow, since I have no rifle. How about the one hanging in the guest house? Can I take that?"

Dian's eyes lit with mirth. "Are you Tal-Eika, come again to life? I have called you Tall One—which is Tal-Eika in our language—but only in pleasure. He was a great chief, husband to Dian Lilth, who lived and died a hundred winters before Dian Chulee, who am I. He was a hand taller than you. The old men tell stories about him on winter nights, of how he killed Yore with his naked hands, and other great deeds. It is his bow that hangs in the guest house, waiting for a hunter strong enough to shoot it."

The bliss and enthusiasm of youth swept over Adam. His skin tingled, and he forgot the inner strife and trouble which weighed so heavily upon him. "Why do you keep it there, instead of in the temple?"

"What is now the guest house was Tal-Eika's dwelling, before he mated with Dian Lilth and became chief. His bow hangs there partly to mark the spot—as if we could ever forget!—and partly as a taunt to the hunters from nearby villages who rest in the house when they come to say prayers to Dian. *Their* villages—there are several, in the Moss Country—have never yet sent a man who can shoot his bow."

"And you mean to say that of all the strong men in all your villages, there is not one that can handle it?"

"Not one. I am glad, because if a man did arise who could shoot the bow, the hunters might think he was another Tal-Eika, and ask Dian to make him her husband. It would be good to have such a man, with arms so strong, but Dian would rather choose her own mate, perhaps one not so strong but with greater wisdom and more laughter who could lead her people."

"So you don't think there is any use of my trying to shoot the bow?"

"It would make the hunters smile to see you try and fail. You are my Tall One, but you are not Tal-Eika."

Adam was dumbfounded by this development. He knew perfectly well that he was not Tal-Eika, or any of his ilk, yet he could shoot Tal-Eika's bow. Moreover, he knew that there were countless thousands of men in his own country who with a few months' practise could do the same. One archer of his acquaintance never used a lighter bow; there was another, well known in the sport, who regularly shot a bow drawing twenty pounds more.

True, Adam had a powerful, well-conditioned body. But there were many men in the villages with bigger muscles, many who were his equal if not superior in general athletic prowess. He was far from a superman, and could not even pretend that he could kill a bear with his naked hands. Yet the fact remained that he was able to shoot, with comparative ease, a weapon that over-bowed all of Dian's hunters, and which had not been shot since the death of its owner several decades before.

It was not a matter of practise. The Cro-Magnon men lived with their bows in their hands; he was only an amateur. He put his keen mind on the mystery, and soon evolved an answer.

The Cro-Magnons were a race apart, with their own peculiarities of bone and muscle. Their upper arms were somewhat short, compared to Americans of the same height. Thus their inability to shoot extremely powerful bows was probably due not to muscular deficiency, but to simple

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mechanical limitations. They could not supply sufficient leverage to draw eighty pounds.

Adam resolved to make the most of his advantage. The more he could impress the tribesmen, the greater his influence over them, in times of stress to come. "I'm going to try the big bow, anyway," he told Dian.

She was incredulous, but obviously thrilled. "Perhaps Tal-Eika has come back," she whispered, her lips close to his ear. "But you shall be careful, my Tall One. The feet of Zwei-Tag are death."

"Who is Zwei-Tag?"

"The game you will hunt today. The scouts have found him, in a valley back of the hills. When you see him, your heart will leap up, and forget fear, and even forget Dian, and think only of the battle, the yells, the running blood. But it is great danger."

"There is always danger. Danger is hanging over the tribe right now. You have warned me, and now I'll warn you. When Belgrade, the Dark One, attempts to repair the flying boat, so we can fly back to the ship, tell him he must wait. Tell some of your men to stand guard over it, and don't let him even touch it. Will you do this, Dian?"

The girl smiled secretly. "I will do it, for you, but I am not afraid of the Dark One."

"Believe me, it is vital. Where is he now?"

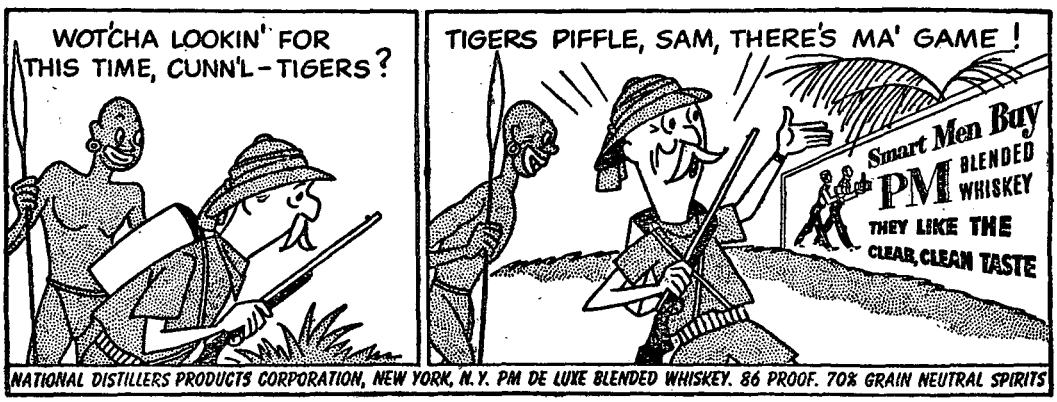
"He has asked to go with Jim-Hull and others of *Ug Paddrin,* to hunt and take pictures of the wild folk." Her tone became scornful. "He carried his gun."

Dian had never seen a gun until now. Both Morrison and Hull had shot away all their ammunition and had discarded their pieces before they were rescued. Morrison had described the weapons to her, but she discredited their lethal powers, and put her trust in ancient bows and spears. Adam knew she was due for a rude awakening. Ten such bows as Tal-Eika's were no match for one steel tube set in walnut. That Belgrade would return from his hunt with the fame of a miracle-worker was practically a certainty; and Adam would need all the strength he could muster to combat him.

Although guns were lacking, bows and spears would not be the only means employed to conquer Zwei-Tag. Every one of the forty or more men who would accompany Adam unpicketed his dogs and led them, well in order on the leash, to the rendezvous in front of the temple. They made a formidable array—at least two hundred gaunt killers, their fur white as their fangs.

Narrow-eyed, treacherous-looking brutes, no more or less than domesticated wolves, they had been marvelously trained and disciplined. This fact was apparent already, at the start of the hunt, and the wonder of it grew as the day advanced. They crouched down, ears pricked for their masters' lightest commands, and the howls and clamor that Adam expected did not once break out. Indeed, they were silent as shadows, a fact that made them seem far more sinister and deadly than the baying, barking hunting-dogs of the North.

Tall, deep-bosomed girls had followed their mates to the rendezvous, their eyes bright with pride. Adam could understand this feeling; it would be hard to imagine a more stalwart, war-like, fine-looking group of men than these yellow-haired savages, their white wolf dogs on leash, and their primitive weapons on their backs. The scene called back the dead centuries—Adam's blue-eyed ancestors, in the forests of Ancient Germany, marshaling to hunt the wild horse. There was never a man of


WOT'CHA LOOKIN' FOR THIS TIME, CUNN'L-TIGERS?
TIGERS PIFFLE, SAM, THERE'S MA' GAME!
Smart Men Buy
PM BLENDED WHISKEY
THEY LIKE THE CLEAR, CLEAN TASTE
NATIONAL DISTILLERS PRODUCTS CORPORATION, NEW YORK, N.Y. PM DE LUXE BLENDED WHISKEY. 86 PROOF. 70% GRAIN NEUTRAL SPIRITS

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their men who was not tall, lithe, and hard, superbly muscular, light of step as their own tame wolves.

They were the last of the Cro-Magnons, one of the noblest races of all time. If they should be wiped out, the world would lose a romance, a living legend, an ancient glory that it could never regain. Yet if their existence became known, their doom was sealed—disease, degeneracy and death—and at last a few tainted half-breeds begging for sugar at the trading store where once the First Fire leaped from the tripod lamp.

But what price their preservation?

PREPARATIONS for the hunt were made with a puzzling solemnity. Suppressed excitement ran through the crowd, as though the men were going to battle instead of to the game fields. When all the party gathered, Stuld-Gavlo, acting chief, kneeled down to ask the blessing of the gods. (Dian later translated the two words that composed his name as "strong spear," but if Adam was not mistaken, they were unimaginably ancient roots of "stout javelin.")

Placing both hands on his forehead, Stuld-Gavlo bowed his head almost to the ground. Dian raised both her hands to the sun, said something that sounded like *Gort Pado Re, yeeben blut og zu,* and then touched his shoulders. He rose with shining eyes.

"What does it mean?" Adam whispered to Dian a moment later.

"As near as I can tell you it means 'Great Father Sun, give blood to thy sons.'"

Now the men were ready to go, and Adam had not yet received his weapons. Was he not to be trusted with them, after all? Dian had promised that she would deliver them to him, but she still stood in the group of hunters, blessing them with the touch of her hand. But now Gort-Chil, who had returned from towing in the flying-boat, came through the crowd bringing the great bow of Tal-Eika. The men stared and grew silent as he turned the weapon over to Dian.

"Canst thou draw it?" she asked, in the Cro-Magnon tongue.

"Nay, Daughter of the Moon. It is the bow of Tal-Eika."

"There is one who would try his strength upon it. Dian will bless its fleet arrows, and put it in his hands."

She came up to Adam, looked at him with shining eyes, and gave him the bow and quiver. "Tall One," she said in English, "bring your shoulder against the thong, when you see Zwei-Tag, and bring honor to yourself and to me."

This touch of drama impressed the crowd deeply. They had respected Adam from the first, with the respect due manliness and physical hardihood equal to their own, but now they looked at him with pleased, rather childlike admiration.

They were not an envious people, but a remarkably open-hearted and friendly lot, and they were plainly championing him in his coming tussle with the big bow. A keen sense of sportsmanship—not in the least unlikely in a people of such intelligence and ideals—as well as a shrewd feeling that their beloved princess might thereby be pleased, made them want him to win.

Still, their manner was in no way servile. Firmly loyal, faithful ever to their goddess, chiefs, and tribe, yet they never forgot pride. They appreciated Adam's boldness in arming himself with Tal-Eika's bow, but they showed plainly that he had not yet proved himself worthy to lead them. When the file started out, they made room for him well up in the line, but behind Strong Spear (Stuld-Gavlo) and three or four other minor chiefs who were evidently the guides of the party.

With the dogs still in leash, the long line of men moved off across the tundra. Adam was aware of a keen feeling of excitement, by no means distasteful to one of his simple instincts. Doctor Weismann, his other self, the cool-headed scientist, wondered as to its source. Was it merely an emanation from his companions, mob-spirit which his trained intelligence should pin down and dispose of, or was it a true reaction to authentic stimuli? But Adam, the youth, the hunter, did not bother his head about it. He was content to walk in file with these Stone Age men, and keep his eyes open for game.

The fresh wind swept the tundra, chill and sharp, blowing from the solitudes unkenned by man. Far off, the snow-covered hills suggested hidden lairs of beasts, age-old silence and unfathomable mystery. The low sun made his face glow. He too could almost worship that sun. Remembering that God-in-Nature is the basis of all religions—the bell that rings through the New Testament as well as the Old—he felt a warm kinship with his pagan companions. Certainly they were closer to the source of things than many of Adam's countrymen who worshipped only the work of man.

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They climbed to the top of a range of hills and, pausing in a close group, looked out over the wild scene. Adam's untamed heart leaped up. Still he could see no game, but only lost rivers, nameless lakes, and the Moss Lands swept by the winds.

But the hunters' eyes were trained to these wastes. Their intent gaze to the eastward and their suppressed excitement showed that they had spied something concealed from Adam. Straining, he made out at last an immense gray shadow like a cloud on a distant slope.

Adam touched Strong Spear on the arm. He knew that the chief would not expect him to know the game of the country, and if he pretended a knowledge he did not possess, he would fail to impress the men and only make himself ridiculous. "What is it?"

"*Bal*," the chief answered.

Adam understood: *bal* was the Cro-Magnon word for a small, long-haired buffalo, similar in appearance to the musk-ox. If it were buffalo that cast that mile-long shadow, there must be many thousands in the herd. Evidently the Age of Mammals had not yet passed its zenith in the Moss Country.

The Cro-Magnons could not live, and feed their numerous wolf-dogs, if the country did not literally teem with game. Yet he should have expected no less. The Arctic tundra of North America, where Europeans have been venturing for a hundred years, has a wealth of fauna practically undiminished since the Stone Age. Herds of caribou ten times as large as this buffalo herd are a common sight to the trappers of Great Slav Lake.

Much to Adam's surprise, the hunters did not approach the herd, but began to follow the ridges in the opposite direction. They were not hunting Bal today, but Zwei-Tag, some other tundra animal Adam had yet to identify. And now the trail was surely getting warm. The men became more alert; the dogs were pointing their ears.

NOW they were mounting a low ridge overlooking a small valley. One man after another threw his head up, sniffing in excitement. The air was still fresh to Adam—his sense of smell had been dulled by the reek of cities—but he knew that these savages had scented game. The dogs were quivering with excitement, their fierce eyes green as beryl. Still they made no sound; they slunk along the ground like white shadows.

Just below the hill-top the men unleashed the dogs and motioned them to crouch. The animals obeyed, trembling; the men broke line and carefully peered over the crest. Adam did the same, and the scene stretching before him was straightway etched on his memory in bold lines never to fade. He would always be able to call back this sight at will, even in its minute detail, just as though it were photographed on his brain; and often it would steal, unsummoned, into his day-dreams.

There is always something sharp and arresting about wild animal views. Perhaps this is due to a natural vividness of animate things in contrast with vegetation and background; perhaps the human senses are excited to a preternatural keenness. In any event, Adam felt as though he had come out of a dark room into bright sunlight.

The scene struck him with the force of a physical blow.

A long low valley stretched before him, all open tundra except for some dwarf willows on the bank of a stream. Beyond were snow-capped hills, running and rising to pearly mountains in the background. In the foreground was a living hill; a creature that had been left there, ten thousand years after his time, like a great boulder dropped by a retreating glacier.

Hull had called this animal an elephant, and Dian had naturally supposed that this was his correct English name. Yet Adam instantly perceived it was no such elephant as is found wild in Africa, and India today. It was not quite so tall, and probably less in weight, although it looked even more imposing than any modern elephant he had ever seen. The hide was not naked, like the bark of a tree, but covered with long hair that swept about in the wind and almost touched the ground—hair not black but golden brown. It was not built exactly like the modern elephant; the head was very high, behind which the back formed an enormous hump sloping swiftly to the short, woolly tail. The tusks were far longer than most elephant tusks, and markedly curled. The ears were comparatively small.

It was not an elephant, strictly speaking, but a woolly mammoth such as are still found frozen, flesh intact, in the ice of Northern Siberia. The natives knew him as Zwei-Tag, the name probably meaning Two-Tails.

Adam knew, now, why Hull had repeatedly mentioned elephants, and why there

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were elephant pictures painted in the caves. He had gone to great shifts to explain both facts, never dreaming that herds of hairy elephants still roamed the Moss Country. Yet it would have been a natural supposition. He had swallowed a camel to choke on a gnat. The Cro-Magnon people and the woolly mammoth had been inseparable from the first—they had fought and killed each other, as their broken bones attest, at the edge of European ice-fields before the dawn of history—and climatic conditions favorable to one would naturally preserve the other. In some remote age both mighty breeds had spread to the Antarctic Continent where conditions had remained favorable for their survival. Here were the tundras fronting the ice, the same as in Western Europe twenty-five thousand years ago; there was nothing to kill them off, so they had lived on.

The last European Cro-Magnon had vanished, leaving his big-skulled skeleton buried in a secret tomb—that and the glory of his dream in mineral colors on the walls of a Dordogne cave. The last Eurasian mammoth was preserved on ice on the bleak Siberian shore. But here, in Antarctica, stragglers of the two great tribes still lived and bred. The mammoth still trumpeted in the hushed dark, and moved, like some great force of nature incarnate, through the wan blown snow of winter. The Cro-Magnon still hunted him, carved his ivory, ate his flesh, and painted him, out of the savage love he bore him, on his cavern walls.

Adam's imagination leaped boldly, and now he believed he knew why the yellow-haired Cro-Magnon and the woolly mammoth had vanished from the face of history. Neither could stand warm weather, the former because of some thermal factor in his body, some peculiarity of his metabolism, the latter on account of his long, dense fur. Otherwise the Cro-Magnon would have persisted, driving back to Asia all other invading races, and when at last the glacial ice retreated from Europe and the climate modified, his primitive culture would have flowered into high civilization. He had the brain and body to conquer the world, but his need of a cold climate had banished him at last to the uttermost South. Except for his warm hair, the woolly mammoth would have persisted with him, clear until the invention of gunpowder, and no swarthy spear-throwers out of Asia could have encompassed his downfall.

All this Adam perceived in a few brief seconds, as he stood with the hunters on the crest of an Antarctican hill. The titanic figure below had not yet discovered the presence of his enemies. He stood alone, his hair blowing in the wind, his ivory gleaming in the yellow sunlight. This was Zwei-Tag, the Hairy One, perhaps the most awe-inspiring living creature that man's eyes had beheld. Adam could feel his heart thump-thump-thump against his ribs.

For a few seconds more the silence held. The animal remained motionless as a stone; the men stood beside the crouching dogs, peering with wolfish eyes. Then the whole vista seemed to explode with indescribable violence.

Strong Spear, the chief, set off the powder with a loud cry. *"Deeva!"* he yelled—so the word sounded to Adam—and the hunters echoed, *"Deeva—muga deeva—muga-deeva."* (Go in! Dogs, go in.)

This was the command that the wolf-dogs had tremblingly awaited. They bounded over the crest and poured down upon the mammoth in a white flood. They were not silent now; all two hundred of them broke into a fierce bay that clapped like thunder and undulated between the hills. *"Deeva, deeva,"* the men yelled. *"Muga deeva, muga deeva!"*

The hunters sprang up and followed. Behind the dogs they ran, shouting in frenzy, brandishing their weapons. And Adam ran with them. He was not now a scientist, marveling at the ways of barbarian and beast, but himself barbarian and beast in one, lusting to kill. He caught up the cry, and yelled as loud as the rest. *"Deeva, muga deeva!"*

FROM now on he perceived this drama not as a spectator, but as one of the leading actors. In the intense excitement of the fight he forgot that he was only a visitor to the tribe; he forgot everything, including his own name, except the fight itself. Yet he lived more keenly than ever before. Every sense was awake, drinking in the scene in deep draughts; he was swimming in a sea of intense sensation. His body moved without effort, springy as steel.

It was pandemonium. It was one infernal mêlée of yelling men, baying dogs, and fighting beasts. Zwei-Tag was now at bay. Around him swept his enemies, white wolves and whiter men, and he charged one after another. When he chased one dog, the others would flank him, slashing his legs and trying to make

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him turn. When, with a scream of rage, he would hurl his trunk into the air and lunge after one of the hunters, dogs and men both would close in, yelling and throwing their spears, until he whirled upon them. It was stab and run, run and dodge, dodge and stab again. For the dogs it was leap, slash, scurry to one side, and worry, worry, worry until the tusks flashed back, and a dog died with a smothered howl.

The odds were far more even than in most hunting. It was not slaughter, as sometimes when the sporting rifles open, but red war. Two dogs were killed in the first two minutes of the fight, and half a dozen others wounded and bleeding. One hunter was grazed by the beast's knee and knocked ten feet, but he got up unhurt. Time after time Zwei-Tag charged one or another of the hunters, and was turned back only when his trunk was curling out toward the yelling foe, about to strike him down.

Most of the spears that the men had were now sticking in the animal's side and legs, and they were forced to withdraw to the outskirts of the arena. The dogs closed in on the elephant, snapping at him and trying to hold him at bay, and perhaps a dozen of the hunters still made desperate sorties with javelins and arrows. The advantage of the bow over the spear was now apparent. The lancers had begun the fight, and had dealt Zwei-Tag many wounds which might ultimately prove fatal, but the archers must finish it. Their quivers still bristled with arrows, which they were sending home in a deadly shower.

At this work Adam shone. Fearless as the best of his savage companions, he stood just outside the ring of dogs, shooting his great bow. Tal-Eika's strong-backed weapon gave him no trouble. When his big arm muscles bunched, and he put his shoulder into the draw, the arrowhead all but touched the belly of the bow. Then he would release the singing shaft, to see it plunge to the feather in Zwei-Tag's huge side. Because of the weight of his artillery, his arrows did more damage than any of the rest. Some of them had already pierced the great blood vessels supplying the heart and lungs, inflicting mortal wounds.

Tossing his head, Zwei-Tag caught sight of him, glared down with eyes as red as rubies, threw up a snaky trunk, and charged. Adam had just nocked an arrow, and instead of taking instantly to his heels, he risked a precious second in completing the powerful draw and freeing the shaft. He turned and fled before he saw where the barb went home, and the dogs leaped up between, but the watching tribesmen had not missed the incident, and they yelled *"deeva, deeva,"* when they saw his arrow thrusting feather-deep in the top of Zwei-Tag's trunk.

Again the dogs turned the monster, and the fight entered its last stage. Zwei-Tag was weakening, but still able to make occasional rushes. In one of these, he chased Strong Spear and almost overtook him. His son, a fine-looking youth named Vund-Sterna (Water-Hawk or Sea-Hawk) saw his father's danger, and tried to turn the animal. Bravely he ran in and sunk his spear in the great shoulder.

He succeeded, but only at great cost; Zwei-Tag pivoted on his hind legs—a movement marvelously quick in one so huge—and swinging his trunk, caught the youth across the shoulders. He was knocked ten feet, spinning in the air, and fell helpless in the moss.

The trunk of an elephant is a terrible weapon. Its thousands of small muscles make it extremely sensitive to pain, and usually he keeps it tucked up out of the way of his enemies, but when he does choose to swing it, it can smite the life from a tiger. If Sea Hawk's neck or back were not broken, it was by the mercy of Dian and the great gods. Yet it might be a doubtful mercy, at best. If he were not dead already, Zwei-Tag intended that he soon should be. If there were bones in his body yet unbroken, it was Zwei-Tag's ponderous intention to complete their destruction.

He had seen where Sea-Hawk fell. Deliberately and heavily he moved toward him, to crush him with his pile-driver knees. Half-dead from his hundred wounds, he was still a grand and appalling foe. He scorned the white pack snapping and slashing at his legs, and side; he did not even look at the hunters who were running in, desperately trying to turn him. His small red eyes were fixed on the prey, his trunk drawn up out of danger, his gayly tinted tusks swaying slowly, gleaming, in the sunlight.

"Deeva, deeva, muga deeva," the men yelled to the dogs, at the same time closing on the fury-maddened foe. But this effort, brave as it was, would not save Sea-Hawk's life. The monster still pushed on, and if he were to be stopped at all, it must be by Tal-Eika's bow.

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Adam stood drawing that bow, the full length of the shaft. He was wild-eyed, half-crazy with excitement, yet somehow he steadied enough to take careful aim. The bow string hummed, and the arrow sang its song.

He was not an expert shot, but he stood only twenty feet from his target, and it was not in him to miss. The shaft, with all the spring of that great bow behind it, struck the brute's head six inches from the eye. The bronze point did not pierce the heavy bone of the skull, but it penetrated the thick skin, and administered a shock, comparable to a blow on the point of a man's chin, to the brute-brain itself. Ordinarily the animal would not have noticed it, but on top of all his other wounds it made him reel.

Someone jerked the fallen man out of the way. The rest rushed in on the now helpless foe with such weapons as they could muster. He lumbered to his knees, gave one last trumpet blast of defiance, and rolled on his side. The noble, ancient life went out of him in one deep gasp.

This was the signal for a wild celebration. The hunters danced, shouted, slapped each other on the back, yelled and laughed, just as Adam's countrymen were known to do after an athletic victory, all that remains of their old carnage beside the Ice. When Sea-Hawk got to his feet, not hurt in the least, and took part in the orgy, the men's joy knew no bounds. Only one man remained aloof—Adam himself.

He was suffering a sever reaction from the excitement just past. Satiated by the red wine that had flowed so bountifully, he felt sickened, vaguely ashamed. For the moment he knew no kinship with these spear-throwers, these blood-letters, these blond beasts dancing about the body of their prey. But presently Doctor Weismann, his other self, who had taken no part in the hunt, who was removed from these howling savages by ten thousand years of culture, but who stood by young Adam like an older brother, even in his follies, counseled gently in his ear. This man of science was ever just. He always followed the compass needle of fact, and was not turned aside by the gales of emotion sweeping the seas of life. Now he set Adam right.

"You needn't feel ashamed," he counseled. "You too are a blond beast under the skin. And these men have committed no wrong. Their battle with Zwei-Tag was bloody and terrible, but not half so brutal as the shooting of African elephants by our own countrymen. They killed not for sport, not to call back the forgotten rapture of cave-days, but so that they themselves may survive."

And Adam's heart bounded up. Joining the group, he too took pleasure in the great bulk of the trophy, and the noble curl of the tusks. At the same time he felt a growing unity with these men who had fought so bravely at his side. All had made war together. All were comrades-in-arms.

Watching these tribesmen, it was a considerable time before Adam noticed that they were also watching him. In their eyes was an eagerness and enthusiasm which he had aroused in his team-mates but twice before in his life; once, the day of the biggest of all games, when he had made a hole through left guard for a ten yard plunge to a touchdown, and once when he had guided his platoon of doughboys out of machine-gun fire to the shelter of a cemetery wall. It was not servile flattery, but the salute of one's peers, a man-to-man tribute which was strangely satisfying.

But he did not presume upon it. When the men were ready to start home, and Strong Spear turned to him, as though to let him lead the file, Adam slipped into his former place. He noticed that they were all careful not to touch his bow.

THE home-coming ceremony showed a new side of the Cro-Magnon people. Like many primitive folk, they had a flair for extempore dramatics. When the hunters were still a mile from the village, they suddenly raised their voices in a loud chorus. *"Vo quimo—vo quimo—ug hed ig wei-Tag vo quimo."* (We come, we come—from the fields (heath?) of the Mammoth.) The men had strong rich voices, and the chant rang thrillingly over the wastes.

From the distant village came the answer; fifty voices raised as one in a long-drawn minor note that made the short hairs creep on Adam's neck. *"Og blut hun?"* (Have you killed? Literally, perhaps: "Is there blood on the hands?")

"Gi, og blut hun," the hunters chanted. *"Gi, og blut hun."* (Yes, we have killed).

Straightway the waiting villagers broke into the triumph-song, rising and falling over the tundra, quavering and almost dying away, only to swell to pipe-organ volume as the hunters swung down to the village. This was no doubt the "Woman's Song to the Returning Hunters," a song that was old when London was a tide-

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marsh, and when the mammoth trumpeted on the Seven Hills of Rome. One line of the song recurred again and again, gaining power with each repetition: *"Quimun veljo, quimun binus mas, quimun formi-rom."* (Come home, [dwelling?] come to the good meat, come to our arm-warmth.)

When the hunters reached the Meeting-Place outside the temple, the women were massed in a group behind Dian. She was lovelier than ever, her face radiant with pride, her gold ornaments flashing in the sunlight. The hunters grouped themselves opposite, and when the song ended, Sea-Hawk stood before his priestess and began a thrilling recital of the hunt. Much of it he acted out—the stalk, the rush of the dogs, the bard's own narrow escape from death, and finally Zwei-Tag's fall. Several times in the recitation he mentioned Tal-Eika, meanwhile pretending to shoot a powerful bow. Thus Adam knew he was not without honor in the tale.

How great was this honor he did not yet imagine. Presently Dian walked to him, took his hand, and led him out in front of the hunters. She addressed him earnestly, in an exalted voice—evidently praising him, his deeds, and his great bow—and then pressed both her hands to his breast. "Come to me, in my dwelling, after the songs are sung," she told him in English.

When the groups broke up, and a hundred men and women were sent for the meat and ivory, Adam made his way to Dian's igloo. His step was light and swift, hastening to the rendezvous, but his mind was troubled. Presently he crept through the long tunnel, and heard her calling him to the warm, secluded room beyond. When he crawled through the inner aperture, eager hands drew him erect.

The sun was low, and the room dimly lighted. Yet he could see the girl's cheeks flaming, her eyes almost preternaturally bright. "Tal-Eika," she whispered, as if she lacked breath to speak aloud. Her hands crept back of his head and drew his face to hers.

She kissed him with all the ardor of her pagan soul.

They were alone. The room, hushed and remote, was voluptuous with soft, rich furs.

The girl was the most vital, the most splendidly beautiful creature that had ever come into his life. No wonder her strong, bare arms could hold him close. He could not contemplate or fear the future; sufficient to this moment was the evil—or the good—thereof. He met her halfway.

But when she saw his eyes kindle, her smooth muscles stiffened, and she held him motionless in her arms. "Dian loves you," she told him. "She will give herself to you as your mate, to share her place, to lead the people. But first you must stand with her, before the First Fire, in the temple, and repeat the Old Words."

"When, Dian?"

"Now, tonight, if you like. Dian is ready. Her arms ache, her lips thirst, her soul yearns. We will strike the gong and call the people to witness."

"What are the Old Words? What do they mean?"

"They are the words that my first father, Re the Sun, said to my first mother, the Moon, when he led her to their home. They will make our marriage sacred in the eyes of the gods. You must say the Old Words when Dian is married to you, or the Ice will rise and cover the land."

A moment before, Adam had been ready to take all that Dian would give, returning love that was ardent as her own; but

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now she had shown the matter in a new light. He tried to drive off the warm mist clouding his brain, and see where this trail led. It could be no careless adventure, to accept Dian's proposal. No matter how lightly he might take the pagan rite, it would establish a marriage bond in Dian's sight, and as such he must regard it.

She was in no sense fair prey to a man, but a maid and a princess of her own people. He could not marry her except on her own, honorable terms. And there was not enough dishonor in his own make-up to let him betray her—to speak the Old Words with his tongue in his cheek and his fingers crossed. She herself realized that his visit to the Moss Country might be brief, and would marry him just the same. Even so, the marriage could not be a mere subterfuge on his part, but a solemn contract entered in good faith, for its ancient purposes.

Did he love Dian? His acquaintance with her was so brief that he did not know. Certainly he could never forget her. The kiss she had given him still haunted his lips. She wakened all the slumbering romance in his being. He could not think of her scientifically; her youth, her bright wild beauty, her warmth and her strangeness intoxicated him.

But if he did love her—if the longing she wakened in him had no other meaning—it made his position all the more difficult. For if he bound himself to her by vows, he must keep those vows; with all his worldly goods, and his worldly hopes, he must her endow. This is an old law, not just a worn-out form. What he accepted he must return; he must play fair.

"Dian, you ask me if I want to stand with you in the temple and say the Old Words," he said at last. "I do want to, more than I can tell you, but I don't know yet whether it will ever be possible. There is a matter confronting me that I can't describe to you. Until it's settled I won't know how long I am going to stay here, if I stay at all. When the crisis is over, I will come to you, and then we will decide what to do."

The girl smiled, held him close in her warm, strong arms, kissed him many times in childlike eagerness, and let him go. Because it was genuine, not false, her pride had taken no hurt by his answer. Truly he had never known anyone who looked on life with such clear eyes, and with such simplicity and grace, as this pagan princess of the Cro-Magnons. His arms ached too; like hers, his lips thirsted and his soul yearned.

HE AVOIDED Belgrade that night, but in the morning he took the bull by the horns and went to see him. He found him surrounded by a crowd of hunters, mostly *Ug Paddrin,* but a few of the Temple caste mingling with the others. They were fingering and admiring the Slav's rifle.

"I suppose killing is the most popular human pastime," Belgrade began in his best vein. "These men are far more pleased with this gun than if I had brought them a new religion. Where have you been keeping yourself, Weismann? I have had a serious matter to discuss with you. I looked for you, but you are either gone hunting, or looking at pictures—you beat me to those, you rascal—or visiting in houses where I, Karl Belgrade, am not invited. These people treat me as an inferior."

For a moment Adam forgot his solemn errand, and laughed aloud. "You have always been on top of the heap before, Professor. I think this will do you good."

"Perhaps, but it won't do them any good. When I return to civilization, and make my reports, they shall see plenty of darker skins than mine. By the way, Weisman, where were you last night, after the hunt?"

"I slept in the guest house. Before that, I talked with Dian."

"So?" The word had a metallic ring.

But Adam did not take the challenge. He had no desire to antagonize Belgrade at this stage of the conversation. "We'll talk later about that. Did you find your hunting trip interesting?"

"Very. I turned out quite a hero to men of my own caste." He smiled dimly. "Do you know, Weismann, this Moss Country is a hunter's paradise. When we give our reports to the world, sportsmen will throng here from every country, and there will be a trading store to sell ammunition on this very river. I saw a number of new species. I was especially interested in *Rhinoceros Antiquitatis.*"

Once more Adam was chargined by his own lack of vision. He should have anticipated this. Where there are woolly mammoths, there would naturally be woolly rhinos. They are invariably companions; their bones lie side by side in Pleistocene gravels.

"The hunt itself was child's play," Belgrade went on. "I spotted the animal across a small lake, and before the savages could blink their eyes, I put him down with one shot. Now they think I am Jove himself."

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Adam stole a look into the sallow, deeply-lined, Slavic face. He could well believe that killing a rhino would be, indeed, child's play to this cold-blooded scientist. His iron nerve would naturally make him an expert marksman.

Adam now asked to speak to him alone, whereupon the two strolled off and sat down on a massive stone seat, overlooking the river. "What have you done about repairing the seaplane?" the American asked.

"That's what I want to talk to you about. For some reason, which Jim-Hull does not seem to understand, Dian has posted guards near the ship, and won't let me go near it. If she should persist in this course for a matter of nine days, what under heaven would we do? How would you like to spend your whole life with these savages?"

"What is one man's life?" Adam spoke grimly. "You have expressed your contempt for it, several times."

"I expressed contempt for the lives of the herd, the countless million who breed and die, not for the lives of scientific men. My life is of great value to science; yours also, no doubt. And, if we are exiled here, it might be several decades before the world learns of our discoveries and this may be too late for us."

"That is true, I think. I hope it's true, otherwise the effort I am making will go to waste." Adam looked dreamily at the river. "I believe I could have the guards removed, if I want to."

Some overtone to the remark, not to be defined, made Belgrade start. "Why do you think so, doctor?"

"Because it was at my suggestion that the guards were posted."

Belgrade remained absolutely motionless, a posture that was far more sinister than any start or gesture. "You have deserted?" he asked quietly, at last.

"No. I never enlisted."

"Then you've gone crazy—stark, raving crazy." His voice dropped to a low murmur. "Weismann, do you know what they do to crazy people in this tribe?"

"Yes. They put them where they cannot harm anyone."

"It's a good idea, a scientific idea, if I may say so. I believe in it, Weismann."

Adam searched the sallow face. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that I don't propose to let any crazy man interfere with this great scientific work that I am doing. My life is mostly concerned with thoughts, not deeds, but I am not afraid of deeds when they are forced upon me, as you already know."

Apparently Adam did not turn a hair. If his heart was leaping against his ribs, it did not pump the blood out of his face. "You mean—out and out killing? In plain words, you are threatening my life."

"I have a rifle here." Belgrade still spoke in low, level tones. "I brought it in case of an emergency. You know me well enough to know that I wouldn't hesitate to use it, for the welfare of science."

"It wouldn't help science very much, or you either. You see, these tribesmen don't tolerate murder, no matter how fine the reason. You might survive me by an hour. Not longer than that, at the most."

"I'd take my chance on that. I have taken chances before."

"There's one other chance you haven't considered." Adam's eyes blazed up and his voice trembled. "I haven't a rifle, thanks to you, but I have a hunting knife. If you make one move to raise your gun, I'm going to give it to you."

Belgrade appeared to consider a long time. He made no move to raise his gun. "Perhaps we can settle this some other way," he observed at last without loss of dignity. "What is it you want, Weismann—equal honors for the discovery?"

"Nothing of the kind." Adam tried not to show his profound relief that the first crisis was past. "I want to make a proposition concerning these people here. You know, even better than I, how wonderful they are. They are the last of a great race—they have preserved something that will never come again on this earth. If it is destroyed, it can't be replaced."

"What, doctor?" Belgrade spoke impatiently. "Be definite, can't you?"

ADAM'S heart sank. "If you don't know, I can't tell you. You can call it physical beauty, for want of better words. At least, it's the oldest civilization in the world, practically unchanged since the ice-age, and I don't want to see it destroyed. I want to preserve these wonderful people, and I want you to help me, even at great cost."

"There's no way to preserve them. As soon as our discovery is made public, adventurers and hunters and traders will throng here. They'll bring disease and civilization with them, which no people like these can stand."

"But why do we have to make our discovery public? Why can't we keep it a secret?"

Belgrade's jaw dropped. For the first time

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since Adam had met him, he seemed a human being instead of an intellectual machine. "What under heaven do you mean, Weismann?"

"Just what I said. We'll give each other our solemn word that we'll never reveal the existence of these people. Then we'll fly back to the ship, and tell the crew that we've been mapping the coast, or some other plausible story. They don't know we expected to find human beings, and they'll never suspect the truth. When we return to civilization, we'll take up our old work where we laid it down."

"But you surely don't understand. This course would not only deprive me of the honors I have fairly won, but would deprive the world of a great deal of valuable scientific knowledge."

"The world will get along all right, and you too. I don't think your honors, or the addition to the world's knowledge, is as important as saving this race from annihilation."

"It is the most absurd idea I ever heard of. You are not a true scientific man, but a crazy idealist. I won't even consider such a ridiculous and fantastic notion."

"I didn't think you would. I hadn't any real hope that you'd agree. So I'll have to go ahead my own way."

"Your own way? What do you mean?"

"You will not be allowed to repair the sea plane."

The sallow visage turned faintly pale. "You're going too far, Weismann. Even you, a crazed idealist, would not be such a fool. It's apparent to me that you haven't considered the consequences."

Adam nodded darkly. "I've considered 'em."

"What if you persist, and prevent me from repairing the plane? In nine days the crew will think we are dead, and fearing the ice, they will return home. Not only I, Karl Belgrade, will be a hopeless prisoner in this village, but you too. You will never again look through a microscope at hidden life and win honor from your colleagues. You will never read another book, or hear a new truth, or talk again with men and women of your own race. You will spend the remainder of your days in exile among these heathen."

Adam's face looked gray. "I know all that. I don't see—what else I can do."

Belgrade shook his fist in the air, one of the few times Adam had ever seen him overcome by emotion. "Why are you such a fool, Doctor Weismann? Why are all your people—you blond imbeciles from the North—such damnable fools? You pursue the ideal instead of the reality. You do this and that against your own best interests. But if you must put your idiot neck in a rope, why put mine? Why do you force me to share your exile?"

"I've no special consideration for you. I told you I might pay you back for using force on me at the start of the trip, even if I had to cut off my own nose to do it. I haven't forgiven you that, not a minute."

"But revenge is not your motive. If it were, it would not be so foolish. At least, you could get a personal satisfaction out of seeing me squirm. Your real motive is bound up in the puerile idealism to which Americans are given. You are carried away on a wave of altruism, sentimental and illogical. What difference, what real difference, does it make to you whether or not these people die off? Aren't there plenty of other people in the world?"

"There are no others like these."

"I grant that. But what concrete benefits can you—you yourself—receive from their preservation? You will be dead too, in fifty years, your life thrown away. Are you in love with the girl, Dian?"

"I won't answer that. It has nothing to do with the case."

"She is mixed up in it, mark my words. You love her, you want to remain with her, and since you know it is against our best interests, you have sublimated that desire to a chivalrous zeal for her people. Suppose you do keep me here with you. Do you fancy you can preserve these savages indefinitely? They will certainly be discovered in time."

"They are well hidden, behind the ice barrier. They may not be discovered for twenty—perhaps not for fifty years. By that time, our own civilization may be so advanced that we will protect them, instead of destroying them. I mean that we will declare this Moss Country a sanctuary, closing it to commerce as we did the Pribilof Islands, and its wonderful race and wild life can be preserved for all time."

Belgrade's eyes had a cunning gleam. "You think this is more important than your work on Coral Fever?"

"Unfortunately, it is." Adam spoke solemnly, with an eloquence far beyond his usual powers. "Other men can fight that infection, as you yourself pointed out. It happens that I am the only one, beside yourself, who can fight the infection of civilization that will destroy these tribes to the last man."

"Very pretty." Belgrade got up, and

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Adam watched him guardely. "You seem set on this insane course, and I'll argue it no more. But I won't agree to your terms, and I'll find my own way to get the plane repaired and return to the ship."

"Then it's trouble between you and me from now on?"

"Yes, unless you stop interfering with me. Why don't you be sensible, doctor? If you will, I'll see that you receive suitable honors when you return to civilization. I might even be willing to unite your name with mine—the Belgrade-Weismann discoveries, or something of the kind—in my formal reports. Certainly I'll give your name to some of the important physical features of the country."

"Even that doesn't tempt me," Adam answered bitterly.

Belgrade stiffened with anger. "Then watch out for yourself. I've given you a fair chance. If you continue interfering with my affairs, I'll take any steps necessary, no matter how extreme, to get you out of my way."

Adam shook his head. "You won't do that. For all your scientific zeal, you love life too well to throw it away for nothing. If you take a shot at me, Dian will have you in *Maun ig Mere* within an hour."

The flicker in Belgrade's eyes confessed that he knew this was true. "I'll find a way to get around you. I have matched with minds like yours before. I give you one more chance, Weismann. Will you, or will you not, help to repair the plane and fly with me to carry news of our discovery to the world?"

Adam slowly shook his head.

"I will not."

"Then what are your terms?"

"That you will give me your solemn word never to reveal the existence of these people, in letter and spirit. If you do that, I'll help you repair the plane, and we'll fly out together. If you won't do that, we'll let the ship sail home without us."

"But to spend the rest of our lives in exile—"

"It is only two men's lives. It won't be so bad, either, and you'll have plenty of chance to make scientific discoveries." Whether or not this was irony, Belgrade did not know. "On the other hand, if I let you go and report this discovery, it spells the doom on the last of a great race. So I'm going to stand firm on that, Belgrade. It's my idea of scientific service, as well as the service of humanity and decency. If it is necessary, I'll fight you to the last ditch."

CHAPTER V

"OUR WAYS ARE DIFFERENT"

ADAM stood firm. The guards about the seaplane were not removed. He told Dian of the danger threatening the village, and coached her what to do if for any reason he himself was removed from the scene. He explained that any contact with the outside world would hurl her people to perdition, and there would be no escape. Until the Dark One, Belgrade, agreed to certain terms which Adam had offered, he must not be permitted to ecape from the village.

No second warning was necessary. Dian took her own measures. How thorough these were Adam did not know; he had not yet delved into the semi-underground administration of tribal law.

To all outward appearances, affairs at the village kept their ancient trend. Belgrade had his own irons in the fire, and since he slept and lived in Jim-Hull's igloo, Adam saw little of him. The American hunted, fished, and explored, but most of his waking hours he spent with Dian. And these hours were the most fleet and happy his life had known.

He learned much Cro-Magnon lore. When he was discussing smoke signals with Dian, the talk led to what she called the First Fire, leaping from the tripod in the temple. Even Dian did not know how long ago this flame was struck. The oldest legends of her people, passed down by word of mouth for uncounted generations, or told in symbols painted on dressed hides, mentioned the First Fire. Over and over again the temple walls that sheltered it had smoldered and fallen to the ground, only to be restored. The stone lamp itself had no doubt burned out from time to time through the centuries, and had been replaced; the ivory tusks that formed the tripod had been polished into thin reeds not once but many times.

The flame was never allowed to go out. If it ever did so, the ice would rise and cover the villages. At every change in the tide the lamp was refilled with whale oil, and when the bowl had to be cleaned, the flame was passed to a smaller lamp that lighted the temple in its stead. To be chosen the Keeper of the Fire—to guard it in peace and war, famine and plenty, summer and winter—was one of the highest honors the tribe could bestow. At present Sea-Hawk, the son of Strong Spear, held the post.

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Adam quickly perceived that the custom was founded on good sense. This is usually the case with primitive rites and beliefs, no matter how strange and weird. In this cold South, fire was the first necessity of life. It was not always easy to make with the wooden fire-sticks in use by the people, and the unfailing flame had no doubt saved many lives. At all hours in the day women could be seen carrying fire from the temple to their dwellings. If this lamp should go out, in some winter hour of disaster, it might be true that the ice of death and extinction would rise and cover the village.

Dian explained the idea of the tripod the best she could. In the first place, the universe of the Cro-Magnons contained three elements: water, land and sky. There were three kinds of living creatures—beast (including all the lower animate things), men and gods. There were three castes in the tribe: the artists, the hunters, and *Ug Paddrin*. Indeed, each individual was himself a trinity: his physical self, which died after certain years; his shadow-self, which moved with him in the sunlight and revealed itself in bright pools of water, and which ultimately went to dwell in the land of the blessed; and his love-self which lived after him in the persons of his descendants.

She told him many folk-stories accounting for the stars, the ice, and the creatures that dwelt on the ice. Besides these, the tribe passed down by word of mouth various ballads and heroic poems. One poem seemed to be a sort of Cro-Magnon *Beouwulf*.

It began by describing the marriage between the Sun and the Moon, at the First of Things. The Sun made the world as a love-gift for his bride, and gave it to her to rule. She bore him a daughter—"Her hair was the gold of her father's hair, but her flesh was white as her dam's—" and she was the first Dian, who wedded the first of the Men.

The first earthly Dian bore two daughters, according to the legend, named Rondalin and Rindalin. They were twins, but Rondalin was the stronger.

RINDALIN was jealous, and in time Rondalin took up her flint ax "as sharp as shell, as the white shell of the sea, and heft in her hand like Zwei-Tag's tusk," and killed her sister. It was Dian Rondalin who was mother of the race, and founder of the royal line. Adam found the story absorbing on its own account, and also because it suggested the old Roman legend of the twin brothers, Romulus and Remus.

After Rondalin came a succession of Dians, down to "Dian Larone," with whom the narrative was largely concerned. The last Dian, Morrison's daughter, translated a fragment of the poem into English:

"Dian Larone, O People, dwelt at the edge of the Ice,
Of the Ancient Ice that ebbs and flows, and roars and cracks and cries,
In a goodly land beyond the land where the pointed green trees grow;
In a goodly land below the Stars that form the Drinking Cup,
Whereof the thirsty gods drink deep, after the hot day's strife;
A goodly land, O People, where the Herds of Many Horns,
Of Many Horns with many forks, like tops of broken trees,
Pass by all day like drifting sand, like blown gray snow they pass,
And no man knows their number."

The poem went on to describe a bloody war between the Cro-Magnons and a tribe of invaders whom they called the Hairy Ax-Men. These latter were bent of knee; they could not hold their heads erect, but thrust them forward; their brows stood out in heavy ridges; the worst of all, they seemed to have no language, but communicated with each other by means of short guttural cries and gestures.

The first wave of Hairy Men were finally conquered, and put to death. Even their women were not carried off alive to the homes of the warriors as is usually the case when one savage tribe conquers another, but their skulls were crushed and they were buried in the same grave with their men. Their hairy skins, pronounced brow-ridges, and prognathous jaws made them abhorrent to the beauty-loving Cro-Magnons.

Adam was deeply stirred; he believed that this was the oldest poem in existence. Moreover, he knew that it was not merely a legend, without basis of fact, but a more or less authentic account of one of the first and most important wars in man's unwritten history. The Hairy Men were members of what scientists now call the Neanderthal race. Their description in the poem fitted exactly the low-browed, bent-kneed, ape-jawed men whose skeletons are found in European gravels.

There is no doubt that they were contemporaneous with the early Cro-Magnons.

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In the age-long wars that they fought beside the ice, under the Drinking Cup—the Big Dipper—in what is now Central Europe, and on the feeding ground of the wild reindeer passing in enormous herds, the Neanderthals were finally conquered and apparently exterminated. At last there was no trace of them, other than their heavy bones and their broken flints, in Europe today.

It was a curious and exciting fact that the Hairy Men were called the Og-Ree. This was their race-name in the Cro-Magnon tongue. Was this the origin of the English word ogre, which has come down from time immemorial? It might well be. The horror aroused by the hairy, gorilla-like brute-men in the minds of the white skinned, beautifully formed Cro-Magnons might echo yet, in the nursery tales of modern times.

"Some day the Og-Ree will come again," Dian told Adam. "Their numbers are increasing; they are biding their time. Then there will be a great war, and blood will flow, and tears fall in the temple, as in the days of Dian Larone."

"But the Og-Ree are all dead, Dian. Our wise men have found their bones."

"But your wise men thought that *we* were dead, too. You told me so. But here we are, and beyond the rivers are the Og-Ree. Your wise men do not know the Moss Country."

Adam was startled, but incredulous. "Have any of your people ever seen them?"

"Not since my mother's time. They have kept to themselves, breeding fast, waiting the day that they are strong enough to overwhelm us. The Og-Ree look like beasts, but there is much cunning behind their wolves' eyes. They know they cannot fight us man to man, but must pour down upon us in herds like the wild buffalo."

"But you really believe in them, Dian? How could they have followed you from Europe, half way across the world?"

"The Og-Ree were here when we came. So the stories say. Wherever you find Zwei-Tag, the mammoth, you find the Og-Ree. We fought them, and took from them some of their hunting ground, but we could not kill them all, as we killed them under the Drinking Cup. They still dwell beyond the great river that you crossed in the flying ship. The last time they came down upon us was in the days of Dian Lilth and Tal-Eika, and only half of them returned to their camps alive. Since then there has been peace."

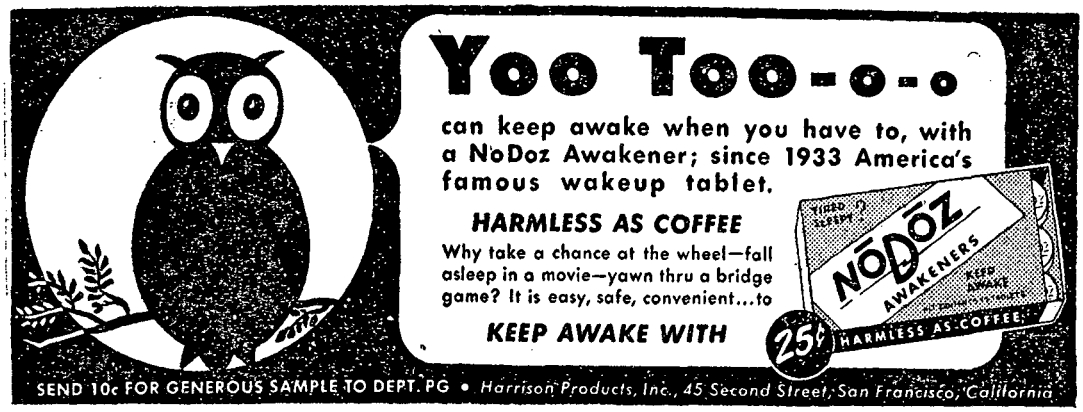
"But no one alive now has ever seen the Og-Ree with his own eyes."

"Some of the hunters say they have seen them, at a great distance. Some day we shall see them face to face, through the hail of stones. They are not dead, Tall One—never believe that they are dead—but only waiting. And from the movements of the wild herds, the hunters say that now, today, they may be on the march."

But Adam remained skeptical. While her story was perfectly possible—the Neanderthals were a cold-country people, the same as the Cro-Magnons—he thought it was probably no more than a legend, carried here from the tribe's old home in Europe.

EIGHT days had passed since Adam and Belgrade had hopped off into the Unknown. In two days more, their time limit would expire, and the *Penguin* would sail home. Lars was already broadcasting frantic messages into the silent air. He feared the ice and gales; he could stay no longer than the ten days agreed upon. The flyers must return soon, if they were to return at all.

Still Belgrade did not yield. He went about his scientific investigations with a composure that dumfounded Adam. The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latter tried in vain to imitate him, but he could not keep from counting the hours between him and utter exile.

As he delved into the lives of the people, he kept encountering one mystery which he seemed unable to solve. What and where was *Maun ig Mere?* He knew in general that it was a cave, the execution chamber of the tribe, but Dian had never told him exactly what occurred in its sinister depths, nor did she point out its location. In their long talks, she mentioned it as little as possible. Adam decided that to speak of it was forbidden by some ancient taboo.

This cavern was destined to have great bearing on the outcome of his adventure. As he walked with Dian on the beach, on the ninth day, one of the hunters came hastening after them. It proved to be Gort-Chil, the chief. His usual calm face was sternly set, and the shadow of some great wrath still lingered in his eyes.

Grave events had been occurring in the village. When Gort-Chil began to speak, his voice shook. And as Dian listened to him, all color swept from her face.

At once the girl whirled on Adam. "This concerns you, Tall One," she told him breathlessly. "Great trouble has come upon us. The Dark One (Belgrade) spoke words that are forbidden. He urged *Ug Paddrin* to rise against me, Dian, and put some other in my place; the tale got back to the chiefs. The men said his voice must be silenced."

"You mean—they wanted to kill him?"

"They were afraid that the ice would rise and cover the land, if he were let go free."

Adam started violently, and seized the girl's arm. "Dian, you speak as if it has already happened—" Then, in horrified tones, "Is Belgrade dead?"

"I do not know. How is the tide?"

"What in devil's name has the tide to do with it?" But at once he perceived that there must be some grim reason for her question, and he glanced down at the lapping waters. "It's high flood."

"Then it is too late. He was put in *Maun ig Mere* at half-flood. Not even Dian may enter there at high flood, and live."

"But it may not be too late." Adam, conquering his first panic, spoke rapidly and clearly. "The tide isn't quite high. Dian, tell the chief to take me to the cave at once. Tell him that you have pardoned Belgrade, provided I can save him. Tell him he is to help me all he can."

The girl seemed to writhe. "But you will never come back. You will throw away a life that is mine—"

"Tell him anyway. Quick, Dian."

Not his words, but what she saw in his face—some passion this savage maid could understand—made her whirl to Gort-Chil, and speak briefly in her own tongue. For all her own trouble and fears, her tones had their old imperious ring. Gort-Chil bowed his head in acknowledgment, and gesturing to Adam, started running down the beach.

It is wholly possible that the early Cro-Magnons were the swiftest of foot of any people that ever lived. Gort-Chil was built to run down a reindeer on the steeps of the Ancient Seine—great muscular thighs and long legs. Although he took now what he considered an easy gait, his companion had no need to cry haste. The pace was already too fast, provided Adam wanted to hold his breath and strength. If he arrived at *Maun ig Mere* spent and winded, his cause was lost at the start.

Adam's mind raced too, and he believed he knew what to expect. Apparently *Maun ig Mere* was filled with water at high tide, and anyone imprisoned there died of drowning. Was this Dian's idea of a merciful execution? She had told him that the victims "went to sleep," but the minutes must seem long, as the water lapped higher and higher, before they slept. If this were the true explanation, *Maun ig Mere* was not an easy gate of relief for aged sufferers, but a chamber of horror.

Gort-Chil now led him to a narrow beach between the surf and towering cliffs, pausing before a round boulder fitted like a door in the cliff wall. Without a doubt, this was the entrance to *Maun ig Mere.* And now his dread of the Known—a deep though rational fear of drowning in the sea—gave way to a creepy terror of the Unknown. Because he had guessed wrong. The death that dwelt in this cavern at high tide was not that of rising waters. The cave was separated from the surf by twenty feet of hard sloping beach.

Gort-Chil seized the boulder, and tried to roll it away. Adam, who was spellbound by the mystery, shook off his stupor of bewilderment and sprang to help him. His strength seemed unimpaired. He had what athletes call second wind—that strange muscular stimulation which nature provides in a crisis, and which, in a calmer moment, Doctor Weismann could have discussed in physiological terms—and with Gort-Chil's mighty shoulders heaving be-

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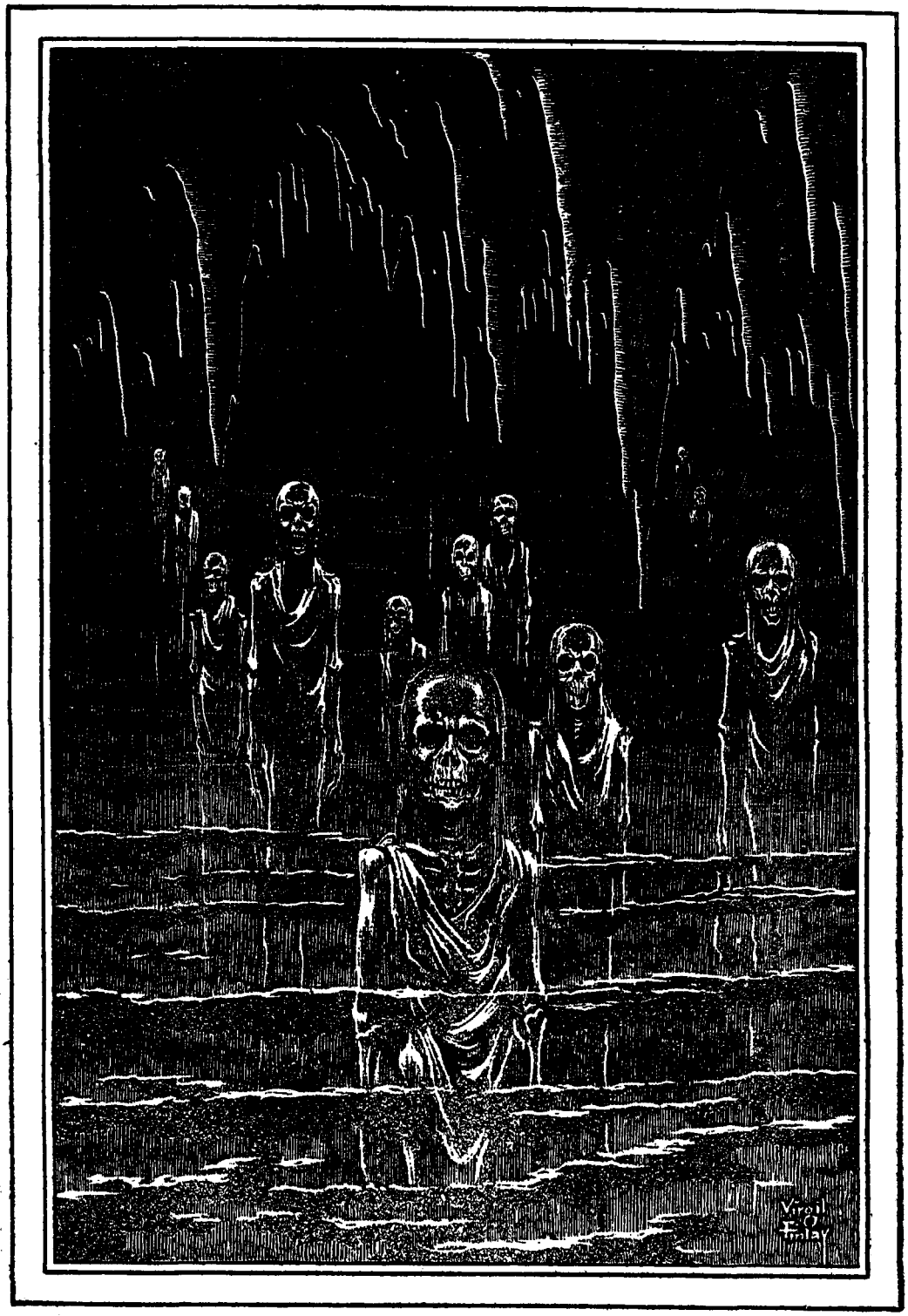

Maun ig Mere, **the mysterious, sinister cavern, whose very name chilled a man's heart.**

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side his own, the stone moved—rolled—fell out of the way—and the cavern mouth was disclosed.

Gort-Chil sprang back gasping, ten feet from the opening. *"Lo mere, lo mere,"* he cried, shaking his head. With wild gestures he tried to warn Adam not to enter. The American did not understand the Cro-Magnon words, but his mind half-guessed, half-reasoned the meaning of this frantic cry. "It is death, it is death!"

And Adam was inclined to heed his companion's warning. He came as near breaking as any time in his life; the cold sweat beaded his face and a chill wind blew again and again across his scalp. He had no love for Belgrade to actuate bravery. His motive in attempting the rescue was primitive to start with, simply life-saving, in the abstract. And all that was primal in his make-up shuddered and quailed at this unseen peril in the cavern.

Yet something forced him on. It was not bravery, in the usual sense of the word; quite possibly it was pride. Men of Teutonic stock are incorrigibly romantic. Unlike some of the darker peoples, who emphasize intellect rather than character, they will throw away dear life for abstract things no man can hold in his hands. Also they are extremely self-conscious; the fear of showing fear often makes them brave. Adam knew he could never live happily with himself hereafter if he did not conquer his terror and make a thoroughgoing effort to save Belgrade's life.

He stepped close to the entrance—swayed from some mysterious weakness—and called loudly. "Belgrade!"

From the depth and darkness of the cavern came a thick voice, as when one struggles with deep sleep. "Weismann."

"Where are you? I'm coming in to get you."

"Stay out, you fool." The failing voice gathered strength, then died away. "It's too late—"

Adam steeled himself, and stooping, crept into the cave. Even now, this early in the battle, he could not move fast. He seemed to be carrying an enormous weight. His legs began to wilt under him. There was something worse than tide-water filling this chamber, no less lethal because it was invisible. Yet Adam felt not the slightest pain.

THE DIM light reflecting through the opening showed a dark shape on the cavern floor. Adam reeled toward it, fell like a babe learning to walk, and found that he lacked strength to get to his feet. From thence on he crawled.

The shape was only seven feet beyond the entrance, yet it seemed that he struggled interminable hours before he got his hands on it. Whether it was Belgrade or a dead body he did not know; there was no longer a voice answering his own. With curious, grim patience he took hold of its shoulder and began to drag it to the open air.

The body could not help itself. The last of its strength, perhaps the last flicker of its life, had been spent in calling a warning to a foe. However, it was not chained to the floor. The wrists were bound but lightly—probably to prevent any serious effort to roll away the stone from the cavern mouth and escape—and there was naught to prevent Adam from dragging it outside other than the invisible barrier of the air, the unseen death through which he moved.

He would not last long. If he were to save Belgrade it must be in the next few seconds. Patient struggle, resting to struggle again, would not win. He must succeed or fail in one final effort.

He made that effort. He gathered up all his failing powers of mind and body, and touched them off, as though they were powder, with a spark struck on the flint of his will. The strength of a strong man is an unknown quantity. It is capable of achievement, under stress, which cannot be accounted for by any mechanical formula. Adam himself had always possessed that capacity for violence—due, perhaps, to some unknown flow of energy from the brain—which makes a discus-thrower, a shot-putter, or a crack fullback of a football team. Now he sprang to his feet and projected himself like a cannon ball out of a big gun, and since both arms were clutching Belgrade's shoulders, Belgrade was projected with him.

This one burst carried both men nearly four feet—halfway to the cave-mouth. Whether Adam could have gone the rest of the way unaided he was never to know. Through the bright disk of the aperture, a hand stretched toward him. It was Gort-Chil's hand, and the act was the bravest of the chief's life.

Actually he was taking but slight risk—even this lethal thing could not poison the fresh, good air of the beach—yet he did not know so, and he would sooner face a charging bear. Perhaps Adam's example had given him unnatural courage. Perhaps he was ready to hazard his life not for

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Adam or Belgrade, but to obey Dian's commands.

Adam groped for the hand, caught it, and felt himself being dragged to the light. Still he clung with his own right hand to Belgrade's arm. A few seconds later all three lay together on the beach, fifteen feet from the opening and safe from its invisible peril.

Adam did not even lose consciousness. He was gray as plaster and helpless to move a finger, but as he gulped the fresh air, the life-hues began to steal back into his skin and the enriched blood wakened the dying tissues of his limbs. As is usually the case with temporary asphyxiation, his recovery was startlingly rapid. In five minutes he was sitting up; in ten he was working with Gort-Chil to revive Belgrade.

It developed that the chief knew how to administer a primitive sort of artificial respiration. When a boat floundered in the surf, and the paddler was hauled to shore half-drowned, the men would lay him on his back and pump his arms up and down. Sometimes, it seemed, this entreaty to the gods, arms rising and falling in supplication, would restore life. Gort-Chil had forced Belgrade to pray in this manner from the moment of his rescue from the cave, and had brought him through the first critical period when his fire was almost out.

Adam helped him finish the work, and within two hours Belgrade lay comfortably in Jim-Hull's igloo, telling his story. When he had been shut in the cavern, he had first made a futile attempt to roll away the stone; then had sat down quietly to wait developments. He had expected trouble, but he had thought it would come in some visible form.

For half an hour nothing whatever had happened; then he had felt himself uncommonly sleepy. Only when he was drifting off into queer dreams had he realized that this was no ordinary sleep, and that if he wakened at all it would be in some Hereafter he had never credited. It was too late then to try to save himself, even though it were possible.

"It was a close call." Adam shivered in remembered horror. "Belgrade, what is the secret of that cave?"

Of course Belgrade did not know, but he had a plausible theory. Apparently the chamber was not lethal in the least degree except at certain stages of the tide; the remainder of the time the executioners went back and forth at will. He reasoned that there was a deep pit under the chamber, filled with some poisonous gas, possibly one of the oxides of carbon, so often found in deep wells, or more likely some other gas of volcanic origin. In the last hour of the flood tide, water-pressure in the honeycombed rocks below forced this gas into the cave through cracks in the floor; when the tide-water dropped down the vacuum sucked the gas back into the pit, leaving the cavern as innocuous as any of the hundred others along the beach. The Cro-Magnons had discovered its lethal qualities centuries before, and although they had no gleam of its secret, they used it as a chamber of execution.

"It was a close call," Belgrade echoed somberly. He lay a long time with half-closed eyes, and the conflict of emotion in his face riveted Adam's attention. "Perhaps it is a sign of some kind. I don't believe much in signs, often they are no more than coincidence, but sometimes they are really shadows of coming events. Be that as it may, I'm going to take the warning."

He paused.

Adam did not interrupt.

"You may be right, I may be wrong. I've been wrong once or twice before, for instance about that Grimaldi skull in Croatia. Perhaps these people are worth preserving. Besides, and I'll be frank, I think it entirely likely that you are enough of a fanatic to hold out to the end. Even on the tenth day, you'd still hold out against me."

He glanced up at Adam for confirmation, and the American nodded. It was true that he would have held out to the end. If Belgrade did not promise to keep secret his discoveries, the ship would sail home without him. Adam would have not yielded even in the last bitter hour—this was foregone.

"I knew it. I knew it all the time. So you can have your way, Weismann. I give you my word as a scientific man, in the name of science, which is the only god I know, that I will withold all knowledge of these people from the world."

Adam nodded, gravely. "I'm sorry it was so hard. You understand that I make the same promise to you. Now I'll go and start work on the ship."

He walked to the door, but not as a conqueror. His head was bent and his step lagged.

DIAN was waiting for Adam in her igloo. She knew what had happened at the first sight of his face. "You are going?" she asked quickly.

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"Right away, Dian. Belgrade has agreed to my terms." He spoke in low tones.

The girl did not flinch. She never seemed so tall, proud and brave. Yet her face was stark pale, and her eyes lustrous with hidden tears. "I will send word that my men no longer stand guard over the winged ship."

"Perhaps I can come back, in a year or two."

She smiled dimly, sadly. "You will never come back, Tall One. Your own world will hold you, and someone's arms will hold you too. Perhaps you will forget Dian, in this lost land behind the ice."

"I will never forget you." His voice gathered power.

"I don't want you to. I want to steal into your thoughts, even though I can't steal into your arms, and when the moon is full and the wind blows warm, I want you to long for me. And I want to come to you in your dreams in the dark, and go away before you waken, as our wild geese pass unseen in the fall nights."

She spoke steadily, in a low clear voice. He listened to her as if already in a dream, a sad poetic dream such as comes occasionally even to plain men like him, the echo of a lost splendor in some unknown pre-existence. Yet she was not speaking fancifully, but literally. According to her primitive conceptions, thoughts and dreams are not the processes of one's mind, but visitations from without. She meant that she would mystically visit Adam; that some occult side of herself would be with him at certain times and make herself known to him.

"You won't be afraid to cross the ice and the sea?" he asked.

"The Dian that you see now, whose arms are around you, cannot come. She must remain with her people. But her shadow-self, her shadow-spirit that flits beside her on the ground in bright sunlight, and looks up at her out of clear water—she can go beyond all the ice and beyond all the seas, and find you no matter where you go. You need only to call her, and she will come."

"I'll call every day." It seemed natural to fall in with her pagan beliefs. "But what will I do when I want Dian herself?"

"What will Dian do when she wants her Tall One? She will call to you, but only your shadow-spirit can come to her, and even this will soon steal away. And your love-spirit—for there is always three in one, as the Sacred Tripod shows—is stealing away now. Tall One, you have cheated Dian. Your love-spirit is hers; your heart promised it in secret to Dian's heart, when your arms were about her, but you break that promise. Why didn't you stand with Dian before the First Fire, and speak the Old Words there as Dian wanted you to do?"

"You know why. Because I saw that we would have to part so soon. And it would have made our parting all the harder, you know that." He looked at her in growing amazement. "Dian, surely you are glad I didn't, now that I have to leave you and go back to my own world."

"Why should I be glad, Tall One? Why should I be happy that I have missed happiness. Your ways are different from our ways. The moon has turned her face, since that night; seven days and seven nights we could have been married. Seeing Dian's happiness with you, perhaps the gods would now be good to her, and not take her husband away from her, but even if they did take him, beyond the furthest ice, his love might remain. Perhaps it would only be a ghost, to come to Dian in dreams. . . ."

Adam kissed the trembling lips. "Our ways our different from your ways. If I had said the Old Words to you, I couldn't leave you now. I would have stayed here always."

"And you said no to Dian, and put her aside, so that you would be free to go?"

"Yes. I suppose that's what it means."

"It was a choice, then, between staying here with Dian, and returning to your own world? You love Dian, but you love your world better?"

"I hadn't thought about it just that way . . . I suppose that's what it comes to, in the end." Adam seemed suddenly baffled and darkened. "Yet it isn't wholly a matter of what I love. I wish I could make you understand—"

"You could, if you understood yourself. Your lips against mine would make it plain. But you don't understand—I can see it in your face."

"Perhaps not. I only know I'm doing what seems to be the wise thing. It isn't what I desire—I don't dare listen to my desires—but what my good sense, perhaps I'd better say my preconceived ideas, advise me to do. I'm trying to be frank with you, Dian, as you always are with me. You know I belong to a different world than this, a world of books and cities and tame civilized life. Don't you see I can't give up that world for this cold and savage world of yours?"

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"Is there someone calling you back, someone you love more than Dian?" She searched his face. "No, there is no one. If there was, I could understand—"

"There is no one, Dian. If I did what my heart tells me, I would never leave you. But to go into lifelong exile—"

"Perhaps I don't know what exile means. In our language we have the saying *ug veljon*. It means 'away from home' or 'of the dwelling forbidden,' just as *ug paddrin* means 'of fatherhood forbidden.' But it cannot be the same."

"It's practically the same."

"It can't be. We would never say a man was *'ug veljon'* if he were with his mate, even though he had taken her beyond the great river where the Og-Ree live. Home, to us, is not the igloo where we were born, but where the heart goes to dwell. If I went with you beyond the ice, I would be home, but my people would be *ug veljon*, because the one they love best would be gone from them."

"Our ways are not your ways, Dian. We can't follow our hearts, we civilized people; we must do what our wisdom says. It may be a false wisdom. I may be making the worst mistake of my life; instead of returning, home, I may be going into exile. But I have to go ahead with it, just the same."

"Since you must go, I pray to the Moon my mother that you are not making a mistake. I could not bear to think of your face dark with sadness. But mine will be sad a long time, Tall One. When I look to the North, the warm wind will blow tears into my eyes."

Tears glistened in her eyes now. He kissed them out, and held her a long time. "You'll find some other sweetheart," he told her at last.

"Some time. This is the world of the living, and my Tall One will be counted among the dead. But the tide will rise and fall, and the moon wax and wane, and the long Dark ebb and flow many times, before Dian's tears are all dried. The First Fire will leap from the lamp, but Dian's heart will not leap with it, and the returning hunters will go to their mates' arms, but my arms will be empty." She clung to him as though she could never let him go. "I love you, Tall One."

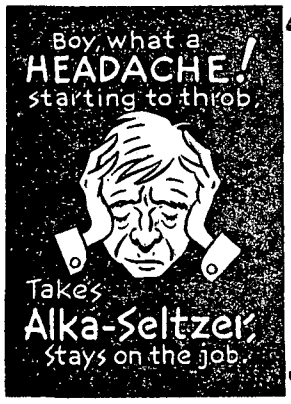
Overpowered by her love, the bonds of his fear snapped free, and he told her true. "I love you, Dian."

But this that should have been the beginning was, to all intents and purposes, the end. Her arms unclasped him, and he crept through the aperture away.

FOR the next hour Adam tried to lose himself in the repair work on the plane to shut out bitter thoughts and haunting misgivings. But every time he raised his head he saw something to remind him of the jubilant hours now vanishing, and the parting to come. The blue bergs floating in the sea recalled the great ice barrier which he would soon cross; the expanse of water itself suggested separation final and hopeless.

Meanwhile the engine work went smoothly forward. Belgrade's hands were deft, his mechanical knowledge considerable, and with the help of the bronze-workers of the village, the broken oil-line was soon repaired. Belgrade, who had worked at high pressure, wiped his hands and smiled. "I think we're ready to take off. And a good thing, too; at the best there's mighty little time to spare."

This was true; Adam had delayed almost too long. The ten day limit was nearly up, and several hours of precarious flying lay between the village and the ship. Moreover, if Lars moved northward before the plane arrived, there would be little



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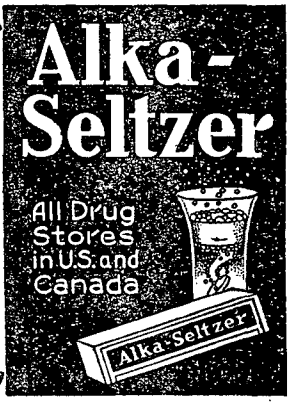

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hope of catching him. The fuel supply had unaccountably diminished; there was little to spare for cruising empty seas.

Certain minor adjustments of the motor were yet to be made, but Belgrade could not get at them at once. There came an astonishing interruption. Half a mile away, Adam caught sight of a human figure hurrying toward him. Peculiarities of its gait instantly riveted his attention; he could not remember seeing the swift-limbed Cro-Magnons move in quite this manner.

Although the native was struggling hard, he could not seem to make speed. He lurched from side to side, and as Adam stared, reeled and fell heavily. He got up at once, swayed uncertainly, staggered like a drunken man, and ran forward again. Running and falling, he made his frantic way down the river bank.

He was not drunk. The traders had never come with firewater to Antarctica. Obviously he had been injured, and was making for the village for help. Adam threw down his tools and ran to meet him.

Even now, before he saw the blood streaking the tribesman's face, he sensed that events of tremendous import were impending. The wings of Fate were beating close about his head; news was coming that would affect his whole life. It might be that he would not fly with Belgrade today, after all. At this thought, his heart began to batter his ribs, but whether with relief or dismay he did not know.

He intercepted the man at the foot of the village street. Under the clotted blood and sand, Adam recognized Strong Spear, one of the tribal chiefs. He had been seriously hurt; an ugly gash over one eye had bared the bone of his skull, and there were a dozen other cuts and wounds on his head and hands.

Adam's first impulse was to stop him and treat his injuries, but the man waved him aside. "*Og-Ree quimo,*" he gasped, as he sobbed for breath. "*Og-Ree quimo.*"

He reeled and almost fell, but now several of the villagers were supporting him, and Adam saw no way to help him. His injuries might be a minor matter anyway, compared to the tidings he brought. Adam did not fail to notice the sensation that his sobbed-out cries created among the tribesmen. He was never to forget the look of intense excitement that leaped from face to face.

In the meantime Belgrade had run up, his sallow face flushed, his pince-nez flopping on the cord. "What is it, Weismann?"

"I can make a guess at it, but that's all. The man has been stoned, I think, or clubbed, and he says '*Og-Ree quimo.*' *Og-Ree* is the tribe word for a race of people supposed to live beyond the river: Dian told me so."

"I know that," Belgrade snapped impatiently. "But what does *quimo* mean?"

"I think it means 'come.' At least, *vo quimo* means 'we come'—the words were in the men's homecoming song after the mammoth hunt."

"In other words, the Og-Ree are coming. Is that it?"

"Yes, but you don't believe it, do you? Surely that's just a legend from the older times—about the Og-Ree."

"It may not be a legend. It may be true. I suspected from the first that two races of people live in this Moss Country. I didn't say much about it, because—"

"I know why. We weren't as good friends then as we are now."

"I did tell you, however, the first night we met, that I expected to discover at least one race, and perhaps two. Hull had heard rumors of the Og-Ree, and I saw no reason for disbelieving them. The Cro-Magnon and the Og-Ree were contemporaries in Europe, they fought long wars for mastery, and climatical conditions preserving one would naturally preserve the other. My present theory is that they had spread well over the world in very early times. Certainly the Australian and Tasmanian natives have many characteristics of the Og-Ree: the low nose bridge, prominent supraorbital ridge, and the skull platycephalic in the extreme; although I would hesitate to say that these natives are surviving Og-Ree. However, if the Og-Ree reached Australia, they could easily reach Antarctica, and if so, the Cro-Magnons might have found them here when they arrived."

"Why so secretive?" Excited beyond measure by Strong Spear's tidings, for the moment Adam had no patience with his fellow's petty jealousies. "Why don't you call them by their scientific name, instead of the name they are known by in this tribe?"

Belgrade adjusted his pince-nez. For the moment he seemed taken aback. "Then you suspected their identity?"

"I'm not an anthropologist, but I read a book or two in my youth. If the Og-Ree exists at all, they are *Homo neanderthalensis.*"

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"Precisely. A good guess on your part, Weismann; I congratulate you. I see no reason why the Neanderthal men should not have persisted in this vast hunting ground, provided the Cro-Magnons themselves did not kill them off. These are not modern times, here behind the ice. They are not even Neolithic times—the New Stone Age—such as exists in the Arctic today, but rather Paleolithic, the last of the Age of Mammals, in spite of the fact that our Cro-Magnons have discovered the use of bronze. It is a fit environment for the Neanderthal race as well as for the Cro-Magnon, and for that matter, *Elephas primigenius* and *Rhinoceros antiquitatis*."

Belgrade's scientific zeal was aroused, and apparently oblivious to the passage of time and the impending crisis, he seemed about to launch into a learned discussion. But Adam quickly brought him back to earth. "Well, we'll know in a few minutes whether or not the Neanderthals still survive. Strong Spear says they're coming."

"That doesn't follow. I *am* inclined to believe they survive—I think it may be true that they occupy remote regions in this vast land—but I can't believe they are marching upon us now."

"I don't follow you—"

"It seems to me obvious. According to the legends of this tribe, the Neanderthals have made no trouble for seventy-five years. True, this might be about time for another invasion. It usually takes about three generations to recoup man-power and to breed a surplus population, the first cause of wars. Also, it is the height of the summer season, when game is plentiful and the weather warm enough to camp out. But why should they choose the same decade, the same summer, the same ten days that you and I happen to be visitors in the village? It is as though they were parading themselves out for my anthropological inspection."

"Perhaps it's just coincidence."

"It's stretching coincidence too far. If it *is* true, if the Neanderthals are moving today upon the village, there's something logical behind it. You mark my words—it will somehow prove a matter of cause and effect."

He was interrupted by the thrilling, reverbant tones of the village gong. Four times the great stone hammer smote. This, Adam guessed, was the Cro-Magnon call to battle, no doubt a tradition in the tribe since first the warriors gathered to make war on the Hairy Ax-Men, at their lost stations beside the Ancient Seine.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEANDERTHALS

HUNTING parties, starting out in the tundra to kill wild oxen and the wolverine-like animal that supplied their silvery furs, heard the call and turned back. Fishermen, casting nets in the surf, laid down their gear and started for the rendezvous outside the temple. Boat-builders, skin-workers, arrow-makers, and bronzesmiths, put aside their tools, picked up their weapons, and came hastening down the village road. Artists, painting pictures in the caves, extinguished their lamps and put down their bowls of pigment, because even such caste as theirs did not exempt them from the Call of the Four Gongs. Forgetting for the moment the desperate urgency of their own affairs, Adam and Belgrade ran with the others to the meeting place.

The news of the coming invasion ran like wild-fire through the village, and the tribespeople were close to panic. Plainly they regarded the Og-Ree with the utmost horror and fear. The name itself was enough to chill their blood. In Europe they had passed it down as a legend, and fifteen thousand years after the last European Neanderthal fell before Cro-Magnon arrows, it survives as the word ogre. Would the men stand, or were they defeated at the start? Adam saw with misgivings their white, strained faces and wide eyes.

But he had not reckoned on their patriotism, their fine intelligence and character by which they could master terror, and particularly their loyalty to Dian. As the crowd began to grow in the meeting place outside the temple, they rallied strongly. Their faces were still pale, but with a different kind of pallor—a white flame rather than a white flag. The mere sight of Dian seemed to renew their courage.

And Dian did not fail them. Her slim body was erect, her head high, her pale face calm, her voice clear-toned and inspiring. Adam had never seen this side of her before. He had never dreamed she was anything other than she seemed—a barbarian princess wielding hereditary power of the accident of birth and the semi-religious adoration of her people. Now he perceived that she had real qualities of leadership, inherited, no doubt, from the chiefs who were her forefathers. In a richer but hardly less savage court

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she might have been a Frankish Bertha or a Russian Catherine.

"*Nea givar*," she told her warriors. "*Dian antos tey.*" (Do not fear. Dian is before you.)

And the savages were not the only ones to look at her in wonder and adoration. Adam's face began to burn; his eyes had that swollen feeling which accompanies intense emotional enthusiasm. He felt himself being swept off his feet in a gale of zeal. He could no longer consider his own interests, nor think clearly about anything. He could only feel.

His other self, Doctor Weismann, the contemplative scientist, was thrust in the background: Adam, the youth, the primal man, was at the helm. The great decision that he now reached came not from deep study, but in one flash of inspiration. Yet his wiser, subtler self did not try to restrain him. Better than he knew his books, Doctor Weismann knew the wisdom of loyalty, the bitter folly of betrayal.

Adam could not desert at this hour. It was simply out of the question. He turned quickly to Belgrade.

"Go and tune up the plane, and leave as soon as you can," he directed. "If you see the Neanderthals coming, fly low over them, and try to scare them away. They'll be frightened to death by the plane. Go to the ship, find another rifle if you can, and tell the captain he must wait five days more. Then fly back and get me."

Belgrade hesitated only a moment. "The plan seems sound. I'll confess I'd like to see the Neanderthals provided they are really coming. But, Weismann, have you considered the risk?"

"There's no risk. Anyway, I wouldn't miss if for anything."

"There is risk. This plan requires three journeys for the plane instead of one. If anything happens in any one of these three, it means disaster or exile for us both."

"It can't be helped, anyway. Now hurry and get ready, there's not a moment to lose. I'll be with you in a few minutes and see you off."

Belgrade hurried away. Adam was lost in the growing fervor of the crowd. By this time nearly two hundred men, the full fighting strength of the tribe, were gathered about Dian. When he saw them arrayed, his last doubts passed away, and the last of his secret selfish fears vanished not to return. He knew now that he had taken the right course. He was jubilant that he had thrown his fortune in with theirs, to fight for them to the last, and to stand or fall with them. Their preservation was worth the utmost he could give. It was the greatest opportunity that would ever come his way.

He could search the world over, and not find a tribe like this. Never before had he realized the physical perfection of the rank and file. Every man was close to six feet in height, muscular, supple, and erect with unfailing Cro-Magnon dignity. Their eyes were bright with excitement, but no sign of panic remained in their stern, intelligent-looking faces. Again he marked their uniform coloring—blue eyes, fair skin, yellow hair. Obviously they strove for physical beauty and perfection with an ardor unknown in the world since the golden days of Greece.

At one side stood the *Ug Paddrin*. They were not quite up to the standard of the others, but were a staunch lot nevertheless, and would fight for the tribe as loyally as the great chiefs.

He made his way to Dian's side. "Count me in," he told her. "I'm going to stay till the danger is over."

"You mean you will help us drive off the Og-Ree?"

"I mean just that. You must count me as one of your men."

She laid both hands on his breast and looked into his eyes. "You are the first of my men, Tall One. You are the chief, to command Dian herself."

STEPPING on to the stone block beside the bronze gong, Dian looked down on her people. There was a red glow in her pale cheeks, and a flash in her eyes thrilling every savage heart. It was easy to believe that she had descended from the bright gods. Full under her spell by now, Adam found himself thinking mystically about her. All that was pagan, untamed, and legendary was personified in her. When she began to speak, a curious throb moved through the crowd.

Her thick braids hanging in front of her shoulders were like fabulous ropes of gold. Her white limbs flashed in the thin Antarctic sunlight. The gold bands encircling her upper arms caught the rays and glowed fiery red.

"My people, there is great trouble come upon us," she said in her own tongue. "The Og-Ree are on the march, and will be at our doors before high tide. They mean to kill us, men, women, and little children, and take our hunting grounds.

"They are many, two to our one, but we

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must stand against them just the same. Every man of my men must stand ready to give his life that the people may endure. But we have driven them back before, in the wars of long ago, and if you will fight them bravely, and not turn from their hail of stones and their flint axes, we will drive them back again."

"Some of them we will drive back," Gort-Chil cried. "But many of them will lie still on the beach."

"It is well. They are the hairy-people, the heavy-browed, the beasts without speech. You will fight them as the first fathers fought them in the Old Place, under the Drinking Cup, in the days of Dian Larone. And the gods of earth, sea, and air, and the great gods Re and Dian, will give victory to their beloved, and to her people."

Once more Gort-Chil's voice rose solemnly from the crowd. *"Daughter of the Sun and the Moon!"*

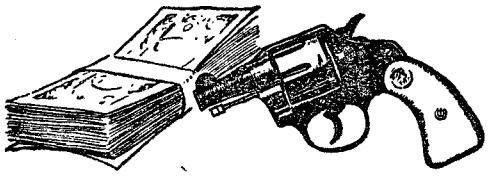
Dian herself directed the first measures of defense. The tame milk-buffalo were to be set free and driven from the village, to prevent their slaughter by the invaders. They could easily be caught again after the crisis was past. Later the whole tribe was to assemble with their wolf-dogs on the hill of the Two Stones, a low promontory just back of the village. Each man was to bring his weapons and enough food to last himself and family through a short siege. There was abundant water on the hill already.

"Nothing remains now but to choose your leader," she said at last in the Cro-Magnon tongue. She turned to Adam, and drew him up beside her. "You know this man. You hunters have seen him in the waste place, his great bow in his hands, standing to the Terrible One of the Red Tusks, and you know he did not flinch. My Mother the Moon has spoken to my heart of him—that he is the preserver of the people, skilled in warfare, and wise like Morrison Chief, and only by his cunning and his counsels may the people be saved. To him I lend the power. Hail him as chief."

The men raised their right arms, hands open. There were no cheers, no audible enthusiasm, but an air of confidence in the crowd not apparent before. Adam himself flushed, secretly moved.

He appointed Gort-Chil to act as his lieutenant, and Jim-Hull as interpreter. As soon as they could get ready, the men were to form their line on the hill of the Two Stones; Adam would join them there as soon as he had completed his own preparations. The crowd quickly dispersed.

But there was one of the number who did not obey Gort-Chil's orders, but instead slipped quietly into the darkened temple. This was a splendid-looking youth, blood kin to Dian—no other than Sea-Hawk, the son of Strong Spear. He could not go with the others, but must make his stand alone. He was the keeper of the First Fire.



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ADAM now ran down to the river to help Belgrade hop off. He found the great Slav sitting quietly on the river bank, and much to Adam's surprise, he made no move to rise. "What's the matter?"

"The old scow won't go," Belgrade answered shortly.

Somehow this blunt answer, a last straw to the day's weight of events, proved too much for Adam's overwrought feelings. He threw back his head and bayed with laughter. But instantly he was sober again. "I beg your pardon. It's no laughing matter. However, you have this to console you—no other anthropologist that ever lived will see what you'll see today."

Belgrade waved his hand. "That's all right. It isn't as serious as it might be."

"I don't see how it could be any more serious. It means life-long exile, for all we know—"

"Not a bit of it. The trouble's in the magneto; pitted points, I think." He showed him the part, which he had removed and put in his pocket. "To repair it is a simple job, and I can manage it in two hours' work."

"But the Neanderthal men will be here before the tide turns. Don't think for a moment that they're not coming. And they'll overrun this bank and cut you off from the village."

"I don't think they'll come near the plane. They'll be scared of it. Anyway, I can carry the magneto with me, and work on it behind our lines. Later I'll see a chance to slip down to the plane, replace the part, and hop off."

"What good will that do? The ship will be gone by that time."

"No. I should have told you at first. We've been granted a reprieve. I was listening in all the time I was working on the ship, and I heard from Lars. He's been broadcasting every half hour all day. He says the ice conditions are some better, and he going to wait five more days, in the hope that we're still alive and can get back to the ship."

Adam received this important news in moody silence. His companion glanced at him curiously—his face did not light, and he gazed darkly out to sea. Apparently it was fated that he and Dian should part. Circumstance was against them. Conditions that might have kept him in the Moss Country, a happy exile, no longer held. And surely Adam's foolish heart could not prevail over Doctor Weismann's wisdom.

He was still brooding when Belgrade's voice gently broke the silence. "Well, here they come."

Adam whirled. "Who?"

"It's true, after all. I was wrong. But why should they pick the ten days that we are here? I still can't believe it is coincidence. There must be a reason."

He pointed up the river. Following the blood-trail of the wounded Strong Spear, came a long file of human figures. There were easily five hundred of them; their line seemed to stretch to the horizon. At the first glance at them, Adam knew that the tribal legends were true, that the Neanderthal race was not extinct but had survived in the remote valleys of the Moss Country, and the war that began beside the Somme "in the dim red dawn of man" was not yet ended.

The front man in the file was, perhaps, half a mile away. Even at this distance, Adam could see that he was no such man as dwells upon the charted earth today. He seemed to be short, heavily built, and he moved with a curious bent-knee shuffle not unlike the upright gait of the anthropoid apes. Yet he was not an ape. He was a man, with man's use of tools, and the dim gleam of man's mind. Otherwise he would not wear furs nor carry weapons.

"This is the greatest moment of my life," Belgrade breathed.

His eyes were shining. Adam had not dreamed that he was capable of such intense emotion. "It's worth a life of exile, just to see it," he answered.

"So it is . . . indeed it is."

He had taken his binoculars from the seaplane, and in a burst of generosity, handed them to Adam for a first close inspection of the foe. The powerful glasses brought the file-leader within ninety yards, a magical bridging of distance that seemed to have symbolic meaning.

For several decades scientists saw the Neanderthal men, but only at an immense distance—minute figures, moving beside the ice-fields of the Fourth Glacier Age. They could behold their shuffling walk—the bone-structure of a few broken skeletons conveyed the fact—and they knew their general build, but they could see their faces only as a dim shadow, half imagined. But now the barrier of distance was removed. Just as the binoculars now conquered space, Belgrade's airplane, another marvel of science, had conquered time. Adam and Belgrade, of the Age of Electricity, had been transported to the Glacier Age, to the wild glory of the Age of Mammals, where the splendid Cro-Mag-

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non and the darkened Neanderthal fought their savage wars.

Adam could understand, now, the horror with which the beauty-loving tribesmen regarded their ancestral enemies. Through the lens the Neanderthal chief appeared a strange, inhuman being. He was not much more than five feet tall, but heavy boned, massively muscled, and, no doubt, strong as a gorilla. The only European type which in any way resembled him was an occasional deep-water Finn, such as Adam had seen on the docks of Sydney—short of leg, but mighty of arm and shoulder due to a lifetime spent at the oars. Yet even this resemblance was superficial in the extreme. Actually, the Neanderthal was of a breed apart, a race so different from modern men that a layman could hardly recognize their kinship.

He could not stand fully erect. In the first place, his legs were ever bent at the knees, as though the weight of his torso was almost more than they could support. This fact accounted for his ape-like shuffle and seemed to indicate a brute inheritance shadowing him still. In the second place, his head did not set on his stooped shoulders like a crown, but was thrust forward.

The head itself was tragically different from the splendid temple of the Cro-Magnon. Its most marked features were, first, the large bony ridge over his eyes, from which his skull sloped swiftly back, and second, the prognathous powerful jaws. It was a large head, possibly full of cunning, but its gorilla-like shape could not help but give a brutish expression to his countenance. His hair seemed to be gray or black, long and matted about the shoulders.

He belonged to one of the lowest races of human kind. Although his intelligence was far greater than the highest apes, he was still far below such brutish people as the African bushmen and the New Zealand Maori. As yet he had never felt the slightest urge toward beauty—he understood it not at all—consequently it had never been bred into his face. The process of natural selection which, had he desired, would have refined his features and given him at least the smooth comeliness of an African savage, had operated only toward practical ends. He was created a cold weather creature, with natural protection against wind and snow, and he had never been inspired to cast it off for the sake of appearance. Therefore his skin was not naked and smooth, but covered all over with short, close hair, grayish black in color.

It was no doubt a great comfort to these wild hunters, and perhaps they were not intelligent enough to shift without it, yet it exacted a heavy penalty in their relations with other races. The rough dress gave them a horrible grisly appearance. No wonder the Cro-Magnons held them in abhorrence, and that the name ogre had its present meaning in European legend.

Evidently their hairy skins did not give them complete protection against the cold. All the men wore a smock-shaped garment of fur. Further proof of their elevation above the beast was shown in their weapons—axes of flint, flint-tipped spears, and leather slings.

THOSE killers were coming down upon the village. They meant to wipe out the Cro-Magnon people, root and branch; to crush their skulls with stone axes and seize their hunting grounds. Yet Adam's first emotion, when he saw them shuffling nigh, was not hate and fear, but wonder and pity.

They were the first men. For them the dawn had just broken, weird and gray; their shoulders stooped, their knees bent, their heads were not yet lifted to the sky. They were human beings, but the gleam that made them human was no more than a faint spark in the brute darkness of their souls. They were the blind beginning, the first upward striving, the thin gray light of civilization's morning on the eastern hills.

They were not capable of right and wrong in the modern sense. To kill off the Cro-Magnons seemed to them a noble undertaking; then they could hunt where they liked and their tribe could increase. They were obeying an instinct to conquest which is the prime motif of all life, the urge of all greatness. If Adam's ancestors had not possessed this urge to a higher degree than other created beings, they never could have conquered the earth, nor reached an eminence from which they themselves could see the difference between right and wrong.

The Neanderthal race had had a particularly tragic history, making Adam pity them all the more. They were the first men, and all human conquest dated from them, yet their children had been driven from their inheritance and their bones strewn far. Unlike the Cro-Magnons, they had left no wonderful paintings to tell the story of their wild lives, and there was no proven trace of their blood in any European or Asiatic race. As far as the world

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knew, they had utterly vanished from beneath the sky.

It was natural and fitting that the Cro-Magnons should hate and fear these brute-men. They had been enemies since time immemorial. But Doctor Weismann was far removed from the carnage by the ice, and could behold them in the true scientific spirit. Out of that spirit rose wonder and pity.

"We'd better move back," Adam said at last. "We don't want to run the risk of 'em cutting us off."

"They're not swift of foot. However, we won't take a chance; they'd smash our bones to a paste with their big flints."

"Perhaps so. However, they'd see at once that we aren't Cro-Magnons, from our clothes and appearance, and they might be afraid to tackle us."

"I wouldn't like to trust 'em. Of course if they'd give us time, we might be able to persuade them that we are divine beings." Belgrade began to jog toward the Cro-Magnon lines. "By the way, Weismann, I suppose you'll have a good deal to do with the coming fight, will you not?"

Adam jogged along beside him. "Quite a little, I think."

"It's natural you would. You are young, and love excitement. I want to suggest that you do everything you can to prevent heavy loss of life. Not only on the Cro-Magnon side, but the Neanderthal, too."

Adam made a quick scrutiny of the keen, dark face. "You've changed your tune, haven't you, Belgrade? I thought you said human life has no value."

"Absurd! I didn't say that. I said that no one life, save perhaps an unusual one like yours or mine, has any value. My point is, that a pitched battle between these two tribes would practically wipe out both races, a serious loss to science."

"It's a different viewpoint than you had before."

"I won't deny it. I suppose I am not above feeling a certain amount of sentiment for our charges. Since I am engaged in an idiotic conspiracy to conceal their existence and thus protect them from the outside world, I might as well go the whole hog and try to protect them from each other. If we put our minds on the problem, we may see a way to scare the invaders away before much damage is done."

"We'll certainly do so if we can. We're in complete agreement, Professor Belgrade."

Glancing back, they saw the Neanderthals swarming over the river bank. They had now discovered the seaplane, and were pointing at it and exclaiming over it in great excitement. And now both scientists stopped in their tracks and stared. Instead of giving the plane a wide berth, they approached with solemn tread and grouped themselves in a semicircle facing it. Like clumsy bears, every man kneeled down and touched his forehead to the ground.

"They're worshipping it!" Adam exclaimed.

"Yes, and that clears up the mystery."

"What do you mean?"

"I told you that their raid at this particular time was not coincidence, but a matter of cause and effect. They have been planning it for years, but after the demonistic customs of primitive peoples, they have been waiting for some sort of a sign before they dared undertake it. When we flew down the coast ten days ago, over their country, some of them saw the plane go by. What is more natural than that they should think it was a god, leading them to battle?"

WHEN the Neanderthals had finished their prostrations to the plane, they began to roam through the village looking for food. This they took as it came—dog-meat, dried fish, and water-root—chewing it with a powerful sweeping motion of their massive jaws. They did not take time to cook the meat. Quite possibly they did not know fire. Their immediate hunger satisfied, they began to gather in the village road, ready for the coming battle.

It was not necessary for them to make camp. They had nothing to make it with, or put in it. Apparently they had never learned to catch wolf-cubs and tame them as hunting companions and guards of their rude stations, so they had no dogs to chain, or no other equipment except their weapons. Apparently they were accustomed to roaming about the country, eating what they foraged, and sleeping huddled together in caves.

Like gray apes they thronged the village road. Mostly they were silent, but occasionally they uttered queer guttural cries, and the sound carried as a low murmur to the watchers on the hill. As they began to move in the direction of the temple, they saw the bronze gong, and a great number of them crowded around to look at it.

They smelled it, felt it, and shook their heads with misgivings. They possessed no metals of their own; naturally they

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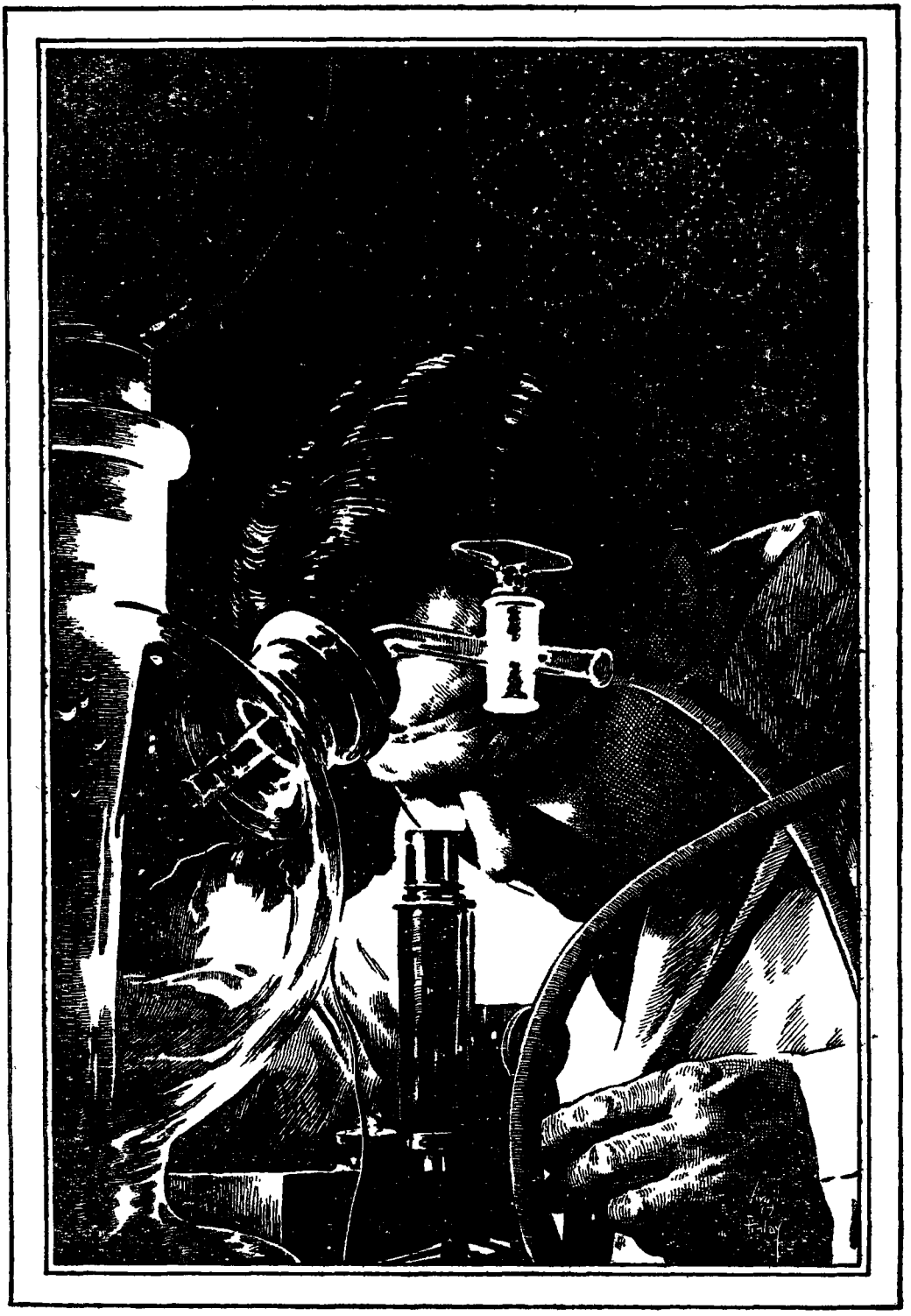

Belgrade's god was science—knowledge—truth. . . .

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thought it was magic of high order. The chief now picked up the flint hammer, and after scrutinizing it carefully and testing all his senses upon it, looked around for some use to put it to. In a flash of inspiration, he tapped it against the metal gong.

The low note startled him, and he dropped the hammer. But he picked it up immediately, and tried again. Delighted by the deep tones, he was soon smiting the gong with all his might, bringing forth a deafening clamor that carried for miles into the tundra and echoed between the hills. In all the history of the tribe, the gong had never spoken so loud. The truth was, no Cro-Magnon that ever lived could put such power into his blow. The Neanderthal arm was strong as a chimpanzee's.

The men seemed greatly pleased, but they did not laugh. Perhaps they did not know how—laughter is no cheap gift, but one of the attributes of immortality, the high faculties of the soul. Presently the chief broke the handle of the stone hammer, and led his men in search of other amusement.

At first they seemed reluctant to enter the temple. They had not feared the igloos, small structures suggestive of their grottos and caves where they spent the winters, but they had never imagined a lair as big as this. Soon their numbers gave them courage, and they began to push through the door.

Exactly what occurred under the great domed roof, Adam was never to know. Watching through binoculars, he saw a considerable tumult at the temple door, followed by the reappearance of the invaders. They came out hurriedly, glancing uneasily behind them. He assumed that the air of mystery in the temple, the ivory tripod and the leaping flame that cast such queer shadows on the ceiling and ran up and down the white whale-bone pillars, had awed their ghost-ridden souls. This was a good sign, he thought; if they would be intimidated so easily, he and Belgrade could surely find some way to scare them out of the village.

The chief now carried a weapon which Adam had noticed before. It seemed to be a bronze-pointed spear of the Cro-Magnon type. "Jim-Hull, are there any weapons in the temple?" he asked his interpreter.

The half-breed jumped as though he had been shot. Adam looked at him in astonishment. "Yes, Tal-Eika. One man's weapons."

"Well, the Og-Ree chief has got 'em. I just saw him come out through the temple door, with a bronze-pointed spear in his hands."

Jim-Hull turned slowly gray. "You say—the Og-Ree went into the temple?"

"Yes. What's frightened you so, Jim-Hull?"

"And you say, Tal-Eika, that they came out with one of our spears?"

"Yes. What does it mean?"

"I don't know, but I am afraid. It may be the ice will rise and cover the villages. Someone must go and see."

"I don't quite follow you, Jim-Hull. If any man goes down there, he'll be killed."

"Not if he crawls between the huts. Someone must try it, anyway. Tal-Eika, let Jim-Hull be the one."

"You are afraid they've harmed some of the sacred objects in the temple?"

"Yes, but there still may be a chance to save them, and turn aside the anger of the gods. Someone must go and see, and bring word to Dian. It would not be fitting for me, of *Ug Paddrin*, to stand guard over the First Fire, but I can bring word if another guard is needed."

Adam did not fully understand the situation, but perceived it had to do with the religious customs of the tribe, and because Jim-Hull was so tragically in earnest, he allowed him to go. "Be ready to run, if the Og-Ree catch sight of you," Adam warned.

Jim-Hull's face flamed, and at once he disappeared from sight. Under cover of the swales, he made his way down the hill to his own igloo. Here he procured a bronze kettle, and when Adam caught sight of the boy again, he was entering the temple.

Just inside the door lay Sea-Hawk, the stalwart son of Strong Spear, his skull broken to bits by the stone axes of the Og-Ree. Even in death he had remained faithful to his charge. The awestruck foe had not dared to step over his body to pillage the altar beyond. Moreover, he had collected his own blood debt before he departed. No less than three of the invaders slept at his side.

Although they had conquered him by weight of numbers, the fight he made must have awed the Og-Ree. They had never seen religious zeal before, and did not know how it will often lend the devotee the strength of ten. Plainly the temple-god was angry at their invasion of the haunted place, and if they persisted, he would surely heap trouble upon them.

They had crept away. The First Fire still leaped from the stone lamp, the sym-

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bol of man's leaping, undying spirit. But it would soon go out, unless tended. The oil was almost gone, the flame was growing fainter.

The very sight of it was forbidden to Jim-Hull and chilled the blood in his veins, but he steeled himself and crept past the terrible dead. Quaking and aghast he stood at last by the tripod altar. Still he did not break. He was not a chief, only *Ug Paddrin,* yet the high gods had appointed him to carry on Sea-Hawk's work. In his hands, he thought, lay the preservation of the temple.

He was afraid to the marrow of his bones of the shadow and mystery of this forbidden room. Yet his hand held steady as he emptied the contents of his kettle into the stone lamp. The First Fire leaped with renewed life.

IN THE meantime, the Cro-Magnons got ready for the coming battle. At Adam's orders, they formed a long line on the crest of the hill. When he gave the word, they were to loosen their arrows on the advancing foe.

He would not give his word until the enemy was in easy range. If his men held steady and shot with their tried skill, they might pick off so many of the foe that the rest would retreat. However, he still cherished the deep hope that the fight would never reach this stage. It would be too late, then, to prevent heavy loss of life on both sides.

The bow is not a long-range weapon. Its maximum efficiency is about a hundred yards. At such close quarters, the Neanderthals could get into action themselves. They had no bows, but according to tribal legend, they could hurl stones from their leathern slings with deadly accuracy and force. Even if they did not succeed in killing a great number of the defenders, they would likely destroy the archer's aim, and, in all probability, sweep on up the hill. The rest would be hand-to-hand fighting, red slaughter, and the horrible chance of defeat for Cro-Magnon arms.

The Neanderthals were strong as gorillas, tough, and hard to kill. In their great, stiff hands their flint battleaxes were formidable weapons; besides, they outnumbered the defenders almost two to one. Certainly such a battle could not end save with the annihilation of one tribe or the other.

Could Adam prevent this disaster? The answer partly depended on Belgrade's rifle. If necessary, the Slav intended to open fire on the Neanderthals when they were still out of arrow range, pick off their leaders one with each bullet, and perhaps by the exorcism of this dread magic intimidate the rest. A dozen lives would be a cheap price to stop the charge. Yet if everything went well, and Adam's own plan of defense proved successful, even this loss might be prevented.

He would soon know. The enemy line was forming at the base of the hill. "You must draw back now, with the women," he whispered to the pale girl beside him. "The stones will be flying in a moment."

"And lose that last moment with my Tall One?" Dian answered. "If he is killed by the stones, where is the victory for me? But I will draw back until I am needed, and then I will come, with the strong women behind me, each with her skinning-knife in her hand as in the days of Dian Larone."

She crept away; Adam watched the slow advance of the enemy line. The Neanderthals trudged silently up the hill. Their stooped shoulders, heads thrusting forward, bent knees, and hairy skins filled the Cro-Magnons with loathing. Yet they were a formidable foe. For all their shuffling walk, they moved with the heavy power of grizzly bears.

In a moment more they would be in arrow range. If he were to drive them back without heavy blood-shed on both sides, he must act now. He stood up and let out his voice in a ringing command.

"Deeva, muga deeva!"

Instantly every brave echoed the cry. *"Deeva, deeva, muga deeva."* At their feet the white wolf dogs had been crouching, beryl-eyed, trembling. When their masters gave the immemorial command, their lean bodies stretched out and they cleared the hillcrest like cavalry horses, in a long white line. Then they poured down the slope toward the surprised foe.

Adam would never forget this scene. At first the charging brutes suggested the white foam of a tidal wave, sweeping the hillside. But as the contour of the hill made their courses converge, they massed up into a living avalanche. There were nearly a thousand dogs in that baying hell-hound pack, and as they catapulted down, they roared like an avalanche itself.

"Deeva, deeva, muga deeva," (Go in! Go in! Dogs, go in!), the tribesmen yelled. Only one thing they missed—the wild stabbing charge behind their dogs, as when Zwei-Tag comes to bay in the tundra. If Adam had spoken one word, they

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would have been over the hillcrest with a yell.

Perhaps, in his desire to prevent a massacre, he had put Dian and the whole tribe in jeopardy. The dogs could not fight well alone. To hold their courage and call up the green-eyed ferocity of their wolf hearts, they needed the support of their masters, the encouragement of human voices and the contagion of human fury. The dogs had never attacked game like this before. And the cries of *Deeva, deeva* from the hill rang ever more faintly in their ears.

Yet they were terrible to meet and face. They came in long bounds, hair erect, fangs gleaming, throats throbbing as their deep lupine bays crashed over the hillside. At first the Neanderthals could not seem to understand what was happening.

True, they had known the white wolves of old. Often they had met them in the valleys between their far hills, and fought them to a standstill, and they had striven together for mastery of the Wild since their race began. But they had never tamed them, and to see them obey the foes' shouts and take sides in battle, made their hearts quail. It sounded like voodoo of the blackest kind.

But the old, long-haired Neanderthal chieftain was not yet beaten. He grasped the situation, and began to rally his men. *"Hoo, hoo!"* he cried. Instantly his followers began to run in toward him. *"Hoo, hoo, hoo,"* they were echoing—a strange, deep-chested croak that Adam would hear in his dreams.

What did this sound mean? It was not a word, strictly speaking, but a call such as wild animals utter. To all appearances, the Neanderthals had no language other than a few cries and signs. Adam felt deep awe stealing over him—so dark were these beginnings of man's present glory—yet he had learned nothing that he did not already know. Dian had told him that the Og-Ree were silent, like beasts. Besides, he had read scientific opinion to the effect that the Neanderthal skulls found in Europe could never have contained the articulate tongue of modern man. *"Hoo, hoo"* was probably a signal to assemble, perhaps merely a call of fear and distress.

THE OG-REE responded as they had learned to do in the hunting-field. Only by a united front could they stand off the white devils of the tundra. If they had kept their line, a ring of wolves would surround each man, and from that ring of death there could be no escape. And they were none too soon; the men at the ends of the line were all but cut off, and sharp fangs slashed at their sides and hips as they came to bay.

"Hoo, hoo, hoo," the Og-Ree wailed. But now they were fighting stubbornly with stones and flint axes. The pack swept around them in a lunging, clamoring circle.

They seemed reluctant to close in. They missed the support of their masters. If the Cro-Magnons were behind them now they might have torn down the prey in one slavering rush, but they could no longer hear the cries of *"Deeva, deeva,"* from the hillcrest, and this hairy, stone-hurling foe was terrible to face.

The Og-Ree were snatching up stones and hurling them with frightful power. When a dog was struck, he fell kicking, his skull or his ribs caved in. They were not using their slings at this close range, but their long-muscled arms were strong and accurate enough.

No wonder the untrained younger animals began to slink away. The hail of stones, the howls and shrieks of their stricken comrades, and perhaps the aspect of their prey—two-legged figures, not unlike their own masters, whom they had been taught as cubs to venerate and fear—was too much for them. At last only the gaunt old team-leaders were left, perhaps three hundred green-eyed devils ready to fight to the last.

And they were a sinister band. The Og-Ree could not find stones fast enough to kill them all, and at every opportunity they rushed in, slashed, and rushed away.

The fight was hot enough. The hill rang with the clamor of the wolves, the shouts of the tribesmen, and the *"Hoo, hoo, hoo,"* of the foe. The latter were steadily giving ground. Still in a close group, they were working down the hill, fighting as they went. Their fur garments were cut to ribbons. Every one of them had a wound or two, the scissor-like slash of wolfish fangs, and a number were seriously injured. They wanted to run, but were afraid to turn their backs on the slavering pack.

Their attempt to take the hill had definitely failed. All fight was slashed out of them for the time being. The tribesmen were cheering, convinced that their cause was won. To save further losses, Adam gave the order to call in the dogs. The shout of *"Quimun hoj, quimun hoj"* (Come back, come back) rose from the hill, and the pack came running up.

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Adam did not join in the jubilee that followed. The cheers of his men and the flame on Dian's face made him uncomfortable. He was not at all satisfied with the outcome of the skirmish. Instead of winning a decisive victory for his allies and vindicating the trust Dian had put in him, it might turn out that he had thrown away his opportunities.

It was true that the Og-Ree had retreated. If they would now give up the siege and go back to their camps beyond the rivers all would be well, at least for another year. But if he had only aroused their fury—and the fury of these hairy brute-men would be no small thing—there was serious trouble to come. The tribe's danger was greater than ever; they had lost a considerable portion of their dogs, and those that returned alive had been cowed by the hail of stones and would be of little use in a second battle. On the other hand, the Og-Ree had not lost a single man. Instead of crawling away half alive to their distant station, they had retired in good order, and for all that Adam knew, were already planning a second attack.

To save life, he had missed his chance for a decisive victory. If he had let the Og-Ree get within arrow range before he released the dogs, the Cro-Magnons would have had them at their mercy. While the wolves held them at bay, a fatal shower could be loosed upon them. As it was, he would have to start again from the beginning.

His thoughts were interrupted by Jim-Hull's return. The half-breed had crept up the water courses onto the hillcrest unseen. "You were not here, with the Men, when the Og-Ree moved upon us," Dian said, with a steely light in her eyes. "Did you find a place to hide, Jim-Hull?"

"I did not hide, Daughter of the Sun and the Moon, I went to see if there was anyone on guard beside the First Fire."

"There wasn't anyone, was there, Dian?" Adam broke in. "Didn't all your people come up here with you?"

"There was one who stayed," the girl answered. "His place was not here, in the open fighting, but alone in the darkness. It is the law."

"What happened to him, Jim-Hull? If those hairy devils got him—"

"He lies, with his skull crushed, just within the door of the temple. Three of the Og-Ree lie beside him."

Dian's face did not change expression. The complete immobility of her body caught and startled the gaze far more than any movement of alarm. "Is the Fire out?" she asked at last. Her voice had dropped an octave lower; this was the only sign of her despair.

"No, Dian Chulee," Jim-Hull answered. "The Og-Ree dared not cross his body. And I brought oil, and filled the lamp."

"Then the people are saved. We shall not pass away. We shall not shed tears for Sea-Hawk, but only for ourselves, that we are left without him. He will become a legend that will pass down, mouth to mouth, as long as one of the women holds a child on her breast. He is blessed by the gods; never before has one of our Men been given this chance. And Jim-Hull, you of Ug Paddrin, shall be a legend too. And these times, the times of Dian Chulee, shall be remembered like the times of Dian Larone, when the Men fought the hairy Og-Ree, under the Drinking Cup, and the name of Dian Chulee shall never die."

BUT Adam hardly heard these strange words. He was pondering what he could do to prevent further murders. Greatly discouraged, he moved back of the

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line and sat down wearily by Belgrade.

"You noticed I didn't fire my piece?" the Slav asked.

"Yes. You showed unusual restraint."

"More than you realize, Weismann. I didn't know I had it in me. I was particularly keen to know how the Neanderthals would react to rifle fire. If I had shot a couple of them—just a couple would have been enough—I think we would have seen something interesting and valuable. The others would have thought it was the act of God, and would have possibly given us further insight into their religious life. But this puerile sentiment that has been growing on me lately got the better of me. I couldn't bear to kill the clumsy creatures even for such a good purpose."

"You may have a chance later," Adam told him gloomily. He related all he knew of Sea-Hawk's death. "They're not licked yet, and if we don't drive them out of the village at once, there'll be more murders."

"I've been thinking about it. I have a tentative plan, and so that we need lose no time in putting it into practice, I have been working on the magneto and have it practically repaired."

With the same calm he would describe a skull-top found in a Dordogne cave, Belgrade told his plan. As Adam listened, he blew hot and cold; one moment he was admiring Belgrade's steel-wire nerves; the next he was condemning him as a fool. But at the end his eyes were glittering, and pleasant tingles were chasing each other down his spine.

"I knew you'd agree to it," Belgrade said. "That was a foregone conclusion. You're not much better than a Neanderthal yourself, Weismann—at the best, a Cro-Magnon—in spite of your rather able scientific mind. As for the early Teuton, the bloody-handed killer of Neolithic times, if you'd take off your flying suit, put on a horned helmet and a fur garment, no one could see the difference."

"But I haven't told you that I had agreed to it."

"Your face told me. It lighted up like a schoolboy's, just because you saw a chance to get yourself into a ticklish situation. Why is it that you blond imbeciles love adventure more than anything else in the world?"

"Well, I won't try to deceive you. I think it's a first-rate scheme. It is to 'pull the whiskers of death', as Mowgli says, but if it works, it will be a wonderful thing for both races. It may bring peace for fifty years."

"It may be a wonderful thing for them, and again it may be wonderful for us. We may be cheating them out of a fine fight, just to gratify our sentimental notions; besides we may be interfering with a natural process of evolution—the survival of the fittest—and do more harm than good. But we'll go ahead, anyway."

Jim-Hull was summoned, and sent on a stealthy errand to the village. In the meantime, Belgrade finished his work on the magneto and replaced it in his pocket. The half-breed soon returned with the wind-goggles Belgrade had lent Adam for the air trip, and two ivory lamps filled with whale oil. Belgrade put on a pair of goggles he had with him, and told Adam to do the same.

Civilized people are accustomed to the sight of such apparel. On an airplane landing field, Adam's and Belgrade's outfit would not be noticed twice. Yet they would seek far and not find a better costume for the part they wanted to play. Its very simplicity made it effective. The immense glass eyes would be startling indeed to a savage unacquainted with the use of masks; it made them look just far enough removed from human to be uncanny. It is a fact that the most terrifying spectres which man's fantastic mind has conjured up, in all legend and magical lore, are manlike without being men. Such are far more horrible than shapeless monsters. Indeed, the reason that the Neanderthal himself has left such a legend of horror is that he approximates modern man's appearance without quite reaching it.

Probably they did not need any other trappings to create the illusion they desired. But to heighten the effect, each of them would carry a lighted lamp.

When Adam had explained the plan to Dian and quieted her fears the best he could, he and Belgrade stole off down the opposite slope of the hill. After a stealthy detour, they came out at the outskirts of the village road and marched solemnly down upon the foe.

CHAPTER VII

DIAN OR THE WORLD?

ADAM and Belgrade would have avoided the Neanderthals if they could. They had no real confidence that their ruse would succeed. But the hairy men held the river bank between them and the plane, and there was no alternative.

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They approached the strange foe with all the ceremony they could assume. They strode along side by side, looking straight to the front, their left hands raised high over their heads holding their lamps; Belgrade carried his rifle over his right shoulder.

They seemed fearless, lofty, and the soul of inexorable godlike calm, but really their hearts were hammering against their ribs, and beneath their goggles their faces showed pale and drawn.

They had so little to go on. What did they really know of the thought and emotional processes of the Neanderthal men? These strange beings were thirty-thousand years removed in time. Their minds and souls were an impenetrable mystery; they could not be counted on to react according to any human formula that Belgrade knew. He believed, with good reason, that they were a brutish race of men rather than a manlike race of brutes, and like most extremely primitive people, had some sort of demonistic religion, at least a lively horror of the unfamiliar and supernatural.

But even of this he could not be certain. It might be that they were so far down the human scale that they reacted automatically, unswayed by any sentiments, superstitions, and preconceived ideas. A hungry lion, for instance, would make no distinction between a man wearing goggles and carrying a small lamp and any ordinary man whom he might meet in the jungle.

"Perhaps I shouldn't have got you into this," Belgrade told Adam, when they were still a considerable distance from the foe. "I can think of many unpleasant possibilities that did not occur to me at first. These Neanderthals are just beginning to be human. The more I see of them, the more of an enigma they appear. Suppose, Weismann, that instead of being eye-minded, like ourselves, they are nose-minded?"

"You mean, they'd judge everything by smell rather than by sight?"

"Precisely. The further we go down the scale of mammalian life, beginning with Homo sapiens, ourselves, and ending with *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus,* the Australian duckbill, the more emphasis you find on the sense of smell and the less on the sense of sight. A dog, for instance, may learn to recognize his master by sight, but if he wants to be sure, he sniffs at him. A great many contemporary human beings are more or less nose-minded.

North American Indians, for instance, and some of the African tribes; and there is not the slightest doubt that modern Europeans depend on smell for their daily interpretation of life far more than they realize. Suppose these Neanderthals don't see well, but smell marvelously well. It's an entirely likely possibility. They represent one of nature's unsuccessful experiments, you know, and differ from us in many particulars."

"In that case, they wouldn't be afraid of us. Is that what you mean?"

"Of course. They would immediately recognize us as men, not gods, and attack us. This hocus-pocus of ours is made to see, not to smell. It's as though we had dug trenches to resist an infantry invasion, only to have the invaders come in airplanes."

But Adam seemed skeptical. "It's hard for me to imagine."

"To be sure." Belgrade forgot the nearing danger, and spoke with scorn. "Human beings are lamentably inept at imagining anything outside their own ten acre field. Let me assure you, it would be wholly possible for a race of men to develop, fight, make tools, and achieve something of a civilization without eyes at all. As a matter of fact, certain kinds of ants achieve a complicated social organization, keep slaves, and do marvelous feats wholly with the sense of smell."

"What about our lamps? They're bound to impress the Neanderthals."

"One would think so. Even grizzly bears and such like nose-minded animals are more or less afraid of fire, and to see us carrying it may frighten them off. This is, of course, assuming they have no knowledge of fire themselves, a probability but not a certainty. On the other hand, it is entirely possible that they know how to rub sticks, and that even now the cooking-fires are blazing in front of their distant caves."

"In other words, we're working in the dark."

"Positively. They may be so far down the scale that they cannot imagine demons and gods, and will look upon us as some new kind of man to kill and possibly to eat. Or, they may think we are Cro-Magnon gods, and take a pious pleasure in destroying us, just as invading armies often destroy the idols and unfamiliar gods they see in the conquered temples."

For a time Adam stalked along in silence. "I think we're all right," he observed at last. "They're just men, after all, in spite of their infernal looks."

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"Yes, and that's the greatest danger of all. Their brutish appearance deceives us; they are true men, and may have far more cunning in their big skulls than we think. They may not only know about fire, but also about wizards and religious rites, in which case they would be familiar with masks. In fact, I've never known any tribe of men, not even bushmen, who didn't wear masks at times. If this is the case here, they'll see through our disguise and hocus-pocus in an instant, and stone us to death."

Adam stopped for a brief second. "What shall we do?"

"We'll go on, and hope for the best. We may come through all right. But if one of them as much as threatens us with a stone, I'm going to let him have it."

"Then shoot straight, and don't waste any cartridges. At least it will put the fear of God in them for a moment, and give us time to get away."

So it was agreed. They were two against five hundred, and if it came to a showdown, they must not stop at half measures. Certainly Belgrade would waste none of his ammunition. He was the most perfectly coordinated man that Adam had ever known, an expert in every line he undertook, and if his rifle ever came to his shoulder, it would speak death to the Og-Ree. Yet Adam still hoped that the foe could be intimidated without loss of life.

He would soon know. Himself and Belgrade were within two hundred yards of the enemy band. The Og-Ree had seen them, and were croaking and exclaiming in intense excitement. They began to crowd around their old hairy chieftain, staring from under the strange ridges of their brows.

ADAM and Belgrade stalked nearer. They made for the plane, meanwhile pretending not to notice the grisly band on the river bank, but actually keeping as strict watch as their goggles permitted. Adam would never forget this scene. He was swept by a flood of conflicting emotions—wonder, pity, fear, and an excited thrill of adventure beyond any experience of his life.

Even Belgrade must have tasted fear. His steel-wire nerves could not help but be shaken by the sight of the strange, inhuman band, living relics of a lost, forgotten age. These were the first men. They were Neanderthals, true, comparatively late comers to the earth, yet they were the direct descendants of the unimaginably ancient Trinil race, as far as science knows the first emerging from the darkness of brute life when the world was young. The Trinils, whom Belgrade called *Pithecanthropis erectus*, represented a transition stage; the Neanderthals had just made the Great Change.

But although his body was afraid, his mind and soul were exalted beyond words. The pallor of his face was more akin to rapture than terror. No longer did he regret his promise to Adam. It was feast enough just to behold such sights, and world acclaim for his discoveries would be no more than broken meats. He was content—he too wanted to preserve this wonder for all time.

The Neanderthals stood bent-kneed, stoop-shouldered, their low-browed heads thrust forward. He could see their faces, now—brutish, yet unmistakably human rather than pithecoid. The front of the face, mouth, nose, and forehead, was bare of the coarse grayish hair that covered the remainder of the body; there was a gleam of intelligence in the wild eyes. Their huge muscular hands were stiff-thumbed, but human none the less; their naked palms flashed white as they made little, uneasy motions.

"Hoo, hoo," the old chieftain was croaking. All over the throng rose subdued cries of *"Hoo, hoo, hoo."*

It was a cry of dismay, perhaps wonder and astonishment, rather than rage, and indicated that Belgrade's ruse was succeeding. Plainly the Neanderthals regarded him and his companion as supernatural beings.

They seemed to shrink back. With cries of *"hoo, hoo, hoo,"* they pressed and pushed out of the way of the tall god-like forms, until at last they were massed behind their old chief. Adam would never know what thoughts moved in their dull brains, but it would always remain an absorbing subject of conjecture.

Apparently they did not know anything about masks. A cave-dwelling people, instinct-driven and inarticulate, they had not yet evolved complicated ceremonies and totems which would call for personations and disguise. They gazed with manifest dread and horror at the great, staring, goggle-eyes, far more than at the strange garments which the two wore, or the flaming lamps held high above their heads.

Yet the lamps played an important part in the success of the stratagem. The goggles alone might have driven the Neanderthal men crazy with terror, and in stam-

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pede, not unlike the stampede of wild animals, they might have attacked the frightful figures. If this had happened, Belgrade's rifle might not have saved him from the shower of stones. But the high-held lamps added a ritualistic air to the visitation, inciting awe rather than blind panic.

Fire has always been intricately bound up with religious practices. There is scarcely to be found a ritual in which fire plays no part. It was one of the first mysteries man observed, and remains a mystery still. There is no better symbol of human dominance; its control has raised man out of jungle dark almost to godhead. The Neanderthals did not possess fire, but they had seen it, and they worshipped it for the leaping, unattainable power that it was. They associated it in their minds with all that was awe-inspiring, life-giving, and supernatural. Their experience with Sea-Hawk today had increased their awe of it. Surely these big-eyed beings who thus carried it so high over their heads must themselves be gods.

They saw that the two were going toward the winged god on the water, and connected them with it in a divine relationship. No doubt they were all-powerful. Otherwise they would have never dared approach in visible form. To throw stones at such deities would be instant death. To raise the flint ax against them would cause the earth to open and swallow the tribe.

THE Neanderthals hung back, whispering and grunting. Not one of them made a threatening move; they would have liked to flee, had they dared turn their backs on the omnipotent beings. The old chief himself was awed to the marrow of his bones, and stood shaking his head in dismay.

"Do you see that?" Belgrade asked, out of the corner of his mouth.

"Don't try to talk! It may give us away, and set 'em on us."

"On the contrary, they'll be all the more impressed. Inarticulate people like these can't help but be awed by the gift of tongues. Don't look at me when you talk, then they won't know we're talking to each other, and think it's religious business of some kind. I asked you—do you see the old man shaking his head?"

"Of course. What about it?"

"What do you think it means?"

"It means he's uneasy; that this is bad medicine." Adam had been shivering a little, and his tongue had almost frozen to the roof of his mouth, but now the danger was largely passed and he could talk almost as coherently as Belgrade himself. "Why shouldn't he shake his head at an awe-inspiring visitation of this kind?"

"Why should he?" Belgrade spoke with heat. "As a scientific man, Weismann, you should stop taking things for granted. Don't you realize that this head-movement you dismiss so lightly is of intense scientific interest? Here is a race at least twenty thousand years removed from ourselves. They have had no contact with modern races. Yet they have the same sign of dislike, uneasiness, and denial that we have. For instance, why shouldn't it be reversed, a nod of the head for no, a shake for yes?"

As a test of his own will-power, Adam forced himself to listen to the scientific discourse. "It's startling, when you analyze it in that way," he agreed.

"Figure it out if you can. It's good mental exercise. The nod and shake of the head probably go back to primitive eating movements. When food is good and acceptable, animals lower their heads to eat, raise up to chew, and lower them again. This has gone on since the beginning of land life, in early Mesozoic times, millions and tens of millions of years ago, and it is no wonder that the movements have become conventionalized into a nodding of the head, meaning 'it is good' or 'it is acceptable.' On the contrary, when food is not good, animals move their heads back and forth, sniffing. Naturally these movements have become conventionalized also, into a head-shake meaning 'it is bad' or 'it is not acceptable.'"

Belgrade delivered this discourse in his usual pedantic manner, just as though he were lecturing in a classroom, instead of playing ghost to a throng of cannibals a stone's throw distant. Meanwhile, he stalked steadily forward, his lamp held high over his head. Nor was it a mere gesture, but an important illustration of his complex, bewildering personality. And Adam would remember it almost word for word the remainder of his life. Uneasy though he was, awed and thrilled by the weird surroundings, still he could not choose but hear.

"You notice that they carry their weapons in their right hands?" Belgrade went on.

"Yes."

"They are plainly right-handed, like ourselves. But I suspected as much, when I examined the first Neanderthoid skull in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. I perceived that the left

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hemisphere of the brain was larger than the right, meaning right-handedness."

Never changing their ceremonial pace, they had now reached the river bank, and the success of the stratagem was practically assured. "Why not start the good work now?" Adam suggested.

"Before we get in the plane?"

"We may as well. Their eyes are on us, now—when we get in the plane they can't see us so plainly. We'll both turn and face them, do a little pantomime to impress them, and give them a sign."

They both turned, and holding their lamps high, looked straight at the staring throng. Appalled by the big glass eyes now fixed upon them, the Og-Ree quailed visibly, and edged back. Adam, who did not lack the histrionic sense, raised his free arm and pointed at them impressively.

"How would it be if I fired my rifle?" Belgrade asked.

"Good idea."

"I'll shoot in the air." Then, apologetically, "Somehow I can't bring myself to kill one of the brutes."

Adam was horrified. "Of course not. It would be out and out murder."

"He'd never know what hit him, and I'd give a good deal for one of their skulls, to put in my private collection. It would be of great interest to compare it with the fine Neanderthal skull that I found on the Vezere River in France, and see what modifications have occurred in so many hundred centuries."

"There are three dead Neanderthal men in the temple. You can have the whole skeleton of one of them, if you want it. Now go ahead and fire your gun."

Belgrade raised his rifle with his free arm, pointed it above the crowd, and pressed the trigger. The loud report and the whine of the bullet over their heads put the brute-men in a panic. They would have fled had they dared. It was not courage that made them stand, gasping, but an instinctive habit of defense acquired in hundreds of centuries of precarious existence. They were not fleet of foot. They had learned long ago that flight would never save them from swift-running danger, nor were there any trees to climb in the Moss Country, such as they often played in, swinging from limb to limb, in strange vivid dreams. Usually their best chance was to form a united front, and if necessary, fight to the death with their stones and flint axes.

"*Hoo, hoo, hoo,*" they were moaning. A man at the outskirts of the throng dropped suddenly on his knees and touched his head to the ground.

Adam now began to gesture to them, waving his arm and pointing beyond the river to their own country. Even a dog would have understood that this was a command to go home. He repeated it many times, and the cries of "*hoo, hoo, hoo,*" began to have an eager sound, in addition to their tone of awe and distress, as though they understood and were trying to answer him.

Belgrade climbed out of the seaplane to replace the magneto. The Neanderthals stared aghast; to see him in the arms of the great winged god must have banished their last doubts of his supernatural character. He worked swiftly, and in a few minutes the ship was ready to fly.

Belgrade took his seat at the controls, and Adam unfastened the lines and got aboard. With a roar the ship cut the water, hopped off like a great sea-bird.

The Neanderthals dropped to their knees as one man. Even the old scarred chief, victor in a hundred frays with the horned and taloned denizens of the Wild, bowed his head to the ground. But this obeisance might not save them from the wrath of the Winged God.

WHEN the savages dared look up, they saw the plane circling over their heads. It climbed and climbed until it seemed scarcely larger than a sea-eagle, then it began to swoop down. Adam and Belgrade were beginning an offensive which, if it did not literally frighten the enemy to death, would surely stampede them out of the village.

In all their tortured dim imaginings—the first stirrings of the winged human soul in their half-animal brains—they had never conceived a terror so monstrous. Perhaps its only equal, since life began, was the attack of the pterodactyls, the great winged reptiles of the Mesozoic fens; but this is no more than a half-formed dream, perhaps a memory-vestige passed down uncounted eons from the first archiac mammals new-risen to conquer the earth.

Belgrade had shut off his motor for the long dive, and the only sound was the whir of the propeller. When the ground rushed up to him, and he could see the pitiful uplifted faces of the kneeling savages, he "gave it the gun." The motor caught with a thunderous roar; the ship swooped scarcely fifty feet over their heads.

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If they had been animals instead of men they would not have suffered half so keenly. They would have known fear and its reactions, but not horror, a human sentiment; they would have fled in panic or attempted to hide, but they would not be devil-haunted for the rest of their lives. Because they were human, they attempted to motivate and explain the awful sight, and the only explanation their blunt minds could achieve was demonistic and uncanny.

The sea-plane was, they knew, a god. They had guessed this much when they had seen it flying overhead eleven days before. But instead of a friendly deity, as they had thought at first, a heaven-sent sign to wage war on their neighbors, it was hateful and inimical, like all the rest of the devils and demons that haunted their souls. Likely it was a Cro-Magnon god, the protector of the villages, and its appearance in the sky was not a good but an evil sign, perhaps a warning to remain in their caves and not covet their old rivals' hunting grounds.

Now they had called down the god's wrath; they could hear his awful roars. Looking up, they could see the sinister-eyed beings who rode on his body gesturing them back to their own country. They would be glad to go, if the winged terror would only let them. But for all they dared think, they would be ridden down and slain, and the women in the caves would wait for them in vain.

When the plane began to mount again, the Neanderthals got to their feet and started for home. They ran at top speed, in a long wavering line. They were utterly cowed, but to make certain they would not rally and turn back, Belgrade swooped down upon them once more. This time they did not kneel but ran on in a frantic burst of speed, their strange brutish faces lifted in horror. *"Hoo, hoo, hoo,"* they were wailing—Adam could hear them even above the whistling whir of the propeller.

Belgrade had no fuel to waste, so he harried the fleeing foe no more. There was no need anyway: they were making for home as fast as their short, powerful legs could carry them, and they would not rest until the darkness of their caverns concealed them from the roaring monster of the skies. Decades would pass before they would dare invade the Cro-Magnons again. The legend of the winged god would grow in the years—a legend told not with words, but with pantomime and strange cries—and perhaps a new religion, far higher than the simple demonism they professed now, would come into being.

When the thunder sounded, they would remember the angry roarings of the winged god, and look up, faces pale with dread. The killing of certain sea-birds, whose flight somewhat resembled the soaring and swooping of the seaplane, would be forbidden as bad luck; masks resembling the big-eyed visages of the god men would be worn by their medicine men, to frighten the people, in elaborate ritual yet to be evolved. And perhaps the whole Cro-Magnon country would be taboo from henchforth, never to be violated, never to be looked upon without inward quaking and shaking of heads, and there would be lasting peace between the two tribes.

BELGRADE lighted in the river mouth, and secured the plane so that they could go on shore for a farewell hour with the tribe. "Perhaps it's a mistake," Belgrade said thoughtfully. "Perhaps we should have flown straight to the ship, without coming down here again."

"I don't see why. We have plenty of time to get back."

"We haven't plenty of fuel, and could have saved a little by striking straight across. True, we have enough, with any fair luck and no strong head winds. However, I wasn't thinking of saving fuel. The main saving would be trouble and sorrow and difficulties that are sure to come."

"I wouldn't want to go without telling these people good-by," Adam said darkly.

"It would have been the kindest thing, just the same, especially as far as the girl Dian is concerned. You see the point. Weismann. The people saw us drive off the enemy, and in their jubilee at the victory, they'd scarcely notice at first that we were gone. When they did notice it, they'd expect us back, and keep on expecting us every day, until the wounds of parting were pretty well healed. As it is, the parting will more or less spoil their pleasure in the victory, and will be a sharp emotional experience they could have easily been spared. They'd begun to idealize us even before this last exploit, and I'm afraid they'll take it rather hard when we go."

"Their reactions will be interesting from a scientific viewpoint," Adam said bitterly.

Belgrade searched his face. "There's no call for irony, Weismann. Of course what you say is true—their emotional reactions will be interesting to see and study—but

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I'm willing to forego that benefit to save Dian's tears. You see, I'm beginning to be somewhat sentimental about her and her people. I suppose it's natural, after our hair-raising exploits to save them."

"Dian wouldn't have wanted me to go without saying good-by."

"I suppose not. If she's really in love with you, she'd want that last hour no matter what it cost her in sorrow and emotional shock. But I advise you to go easy, Weismann. If you can avoid seeing her except in the presence of the tribe it would be best in the long run."

But Adam did not appreciate Belgrade's solicitations. "Don't worry about her. I'll do what's best."

"You don't know what is best, my boy. And she's not the only one I'm worrying about."

He spoke so tensely that Adam whirled. "What do you mean?"

"Not only for her good, but yours too, I wish I had flown straight for the ship. You're a romantic American, young, and more or less in love. You'll find this parting a devastating experience which you would have done better to avoid. Moreover, I've given you a chance to make heaven knows what kind of a fool of yourself. *It's risky business—and I should* have prevented it."

"You shanghaied me once. There'd have been trouble if you had tried it again."

"You'd never have known what was happening until you were a mile out to sea. You admit you're glad I *did* shanghai you, the first time. Before you're through, you may wish I had done it again."

Their talk now was interrupted by a rush of jubilant tribesmen. They surrounded Adam and Belgrade in a dancing, shouting mob, and led them in triumph up the village road. The whole village seemed delirious with joy. The Og-Ree were gone, driven off by the magic of Tal-Eika and the Dark One, and the Cro-Magnons had lost only one man.

Belgrade seemed greatly amused by the hero-worship poured out upon him. He laughed and shouted, and occasionally stepped out with the dancing warriors to cut a little caper, more to delight the people than through any excess of spirit on his own part. But Adam remained darkly aloof. His smile had no mirth; he could not even pretend to join in the jubilee.

At the same time he felt it poignantly, to a degree Belgrade could not imagine. He realized that under happier circumstances he could throw himself into it with an abandon unexcelled by any of the prancing savages about him. Not only his parting with Dian, now at hand, had darkened him so, but also his life-long loss of just such primitive outbursts as this. He reveled in them. They expressed a side of his nature that had been curbed until now. They freed him, and let him be himself, and gave him a delirious rapture which came natural to him, but which was impossible under the restraints and repressions of civilized life.

He would never again know the intoxication of mob emotion. The thrill of physical conflicts, the stirring, heart-warming companionship of the battle-ground and hunting field, the strong cup of victory won by muscle and daring rather than by brain and moral strength, the emotion and the raw power and pure zest of life—all these he was putting by for wisdom's sake. He was putting Adam to death so that Doctor Weismann might continue his civilized existence.

Was he making a tragic mistake? He dared not let such a possibility enter his mind. Surely he was doing the right thing, the sane, sensible, inevitable thing. To voluntarily remain in exile for Dian's sake, or for any other heart's desire, would surely be folly of the very last degree.

As yet he had not spoken to Dian. He caught fleeting glimpses of her, as the exultant crowd milled down the village road, but she was surrounded by her adoring tribes-people and he could not reach her side. Anyway, he had nothing to say to cheer her or to lighten his own load. He noticed that her face was pale, her eyes unnaturally bright.

THERE was at least one other of the villagers who had no share in the merrymaking. This was a tall, beautiful girl known as Blut-Blerrin, the name being translated as Red Blossom or Red Flower. No laughter shone in her blue eyes, but only tears; and the only song on her lips was the ancient *Chon ig Mere,* the death-chant of the Cro-Magnons.

She was Sea-Hawk's betrothed. On the next full moon, she was to have stood with him beside the First Fire, to say the Old Words. Now she must stand beside his grave and pray that his shadow-spirit might journey safely to the Land of the Blessed and Happy Hunting Ground where every day there is a great kill, a mighty feast.

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The girl had wandered away from the happy crowd and had gone to the beach not far from the crypts where the Cro-Magnons had put their dead. The tide was going out, and she wished she could plunge into it, to be carried far from this now-desolate shore, into the Land of the Blessed with her sweetheart. Then there would be no tears, no loneliness, and their shadow-spirits could rush laughing into each other's arms.

But she could not take this step. For a Cro-Magnon, suicide was psychologically impossible—perhaps because of some age-old taboo that had come to be second nature, more likely because their desperate struggle to survive in a harsh environment, and the subsequent weeding out of sluggards, had bred in their bones a passion and zest and appetite for life, the common instinct of self-preservation raised to the nth degree, that was stronger than will-power. She must live on until the gods called her, or until in pity her tribe took her to *Maun ig Mere.*

The solemn sounds of the ocean harmonized with her mood, and softened the sharp edge of her grief. The vast expanse comforted her, as it always comforts primitive people, because it suggest immortality, solemn power, and, in its tides, an eternal fountain of renewed youth. When the shouting began to die away in the village road, and the pall-bearers—young men appointed by Dian—remembered their duty to their fallen comrade, she was strong enough to arise and make ready to sing the death-song.

The pall-bearers brought Sea-Hawk's body on a rude bier, laid out for the crypt after Cro-Magnon custom, and covered with a dressed hide on which were painted curious symbols and pictures. By his side were his weapons, various tools, and an earthen pot of food, so that his shadow-spirit might fare well in the Land of the Blessed. Belgrade would have been interested to know that a gorget of small perforated shells was laid on his breast—he had seen the same on Cro-Magnon skeletons two hundred centuries old, found in grottos in France. But Dian herself could not explain this custom; she only knew that it was the express command of the gods, as given to Dian Rondalin in the first days of the earth. Perhaps it implied some sort of sea-worship.

His body was painted blue with mineral pigments. This was so he could fly unseen through the blue heavens on his journey to the Land of the Blessed, and not be overtaken and seized by the demons of the air. The rude bier of driftwood on which it lay was deposited just above tide-mark; here it would remain while Red Flower sang the ancient *Chon ig Mere.* Then it would be put in a crypt.

Ordinarily all of her tribespeople would have come to listen to the song and to join in its strange, quavering chorus, but the revelry in the village still diverted most of them, and only a score of her own and Sea-Hawk's blood-kin now gathered with the pall-bearers behind her. She stood beside her dead, and began her song.

Half a mile distant in the village, Adam could not hear her sweet, clear voice, but he heard the chorus of mourners rising in a solemn, eery chant. It was a moving sound. Just as the cave-paintings expressed the Cro-Magnon zest for life, this dirge revealed their childlike woe of death. At the same time, it was noble art—the young, vital, robust art of an untamed people.

It stopped Adam in his tracks. It seemed to express what was in his own heart. He listened a moment, deeply touched, then pushed through the crowd to Dian's side. "What is that song?" he asked.

She turned to him and smiled wistfully into his eyes. "It is *Chon ig Mere.* Red Flower is singing it to Sea-Hawk. They were to stand together in the temple, and say the Old Words, on the next full moon. Now he is gone, too soon."

"Too soon?" he echoed, puzzled.

"He had promised her his love-spirit, to stay with her always, in her children, but death cheated her, and she is left alone."

"What is it that's cheating you and me, Dian?" he asked thoughtfully. "It isn't death, but life, the life I was born to, and can't escape."

"I don't understand. Life is not stronger than bravery, and love, and hope." Her pale face slowly flushed. "My men are savages, who have no ships in the air, no books, no thunder-sticks that kill at five hundred paces, but they are masters of their own lives."

"And I'm not? Is that what you mean?"

"I don't mean that. I told you the truth; I don't understand. I can understand how death may part lovers, but not life. So when the winged ship flies away with you soon, I will think of it as *Gest ig Mere*—the Death Spirit."

"And you will consider me dead?"

"There is only death beyond the ice, as far as we know. You will be lost to me,

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Tall One, the same as Sea-Hawk is lost to Red Flower—as though you lay in the cave, the covering of shells upon your body. Dian cannot tell you, in your words, of her sad heart and empty arms, but when at last you turn to go, perhaps she can show you in her own way."

ADAM was given no chance to ask the explanation of this cryptic promise. Belgrade, who had been watching him uneasily from a distance, broke through the crowd and drew him to one side. "You are punishing yourself," he said, not unkindly. "Let's get in the plane and go."

"I'll be ready in a short time," was the full answer.

"Make it short then, Weismann. Everything's over, anyhow. We've seen how the tribe celebrates a victory—an interesting point—but the cheers are beginning to die away, and we won't learn anything more of importance."

"I'm not staying to watch the emotional reactions of the people." Adam's tones were grim. "I'm staying to be with them, as long as possible."

"But they don't need you now. You've helped them drive off the Neanderthals, and they can get along all right from now on. And, Weismann, you surely realize you won't make the girl any happier by postponing the inevitable, and it will only make it harder for you to go."

"I wish I had the nerve not to go."

Belgrade jumped as if he had been shot. "What's that?"

"I said I wish I had the nerve not to go," Adam repeated deliberately. "I'm throwing over the only chance for real happiness that will ever come my way."

"Happiness? What are you talking about? The only true happiness is of the intellect. How could your intellect advance down here?"

"My intellect would get along all right. It would see many interesting things, to wonder at and study, and I could exercise it by teaching the people useful knowledge."

"But the real joy of science is not to teach. That is an affectation, a pose. The real joy is to learn, to acquire, to grow mentally, to see the horizons widen, to trace out the same laws of life in the movement of ants in a hill, of planets in their orbits, and of people on a city street. The last, the final pleasure, is *to know.*"

Belgrade spoke with profound feeling. His sallow face lighted. For the moment he had drawn aside his veil of reserve, and revealed his secret being. Adam felt that he had never really known him until now.

Every man to his god! Belgrade's god was science, knowledge, truth—and he worshipped in this temple with an emotional fervor related to genius. He had just declared his life's creed, no doubt sacred in his eyes. Without this fervor, which his cold exterior so well concealed, he could never have been great.

Adam was impressed, but not convinced. His own keen mind began to move with assured power. "You speak of the true happiness, the real joy," he said. "They may be true and real to you, but not necessarily to me. Truth and reality are relative, not absolute qualities, as every scientific man knows. I'm a doctor, and I know a little about the theory of vision, for instance. Suppose I show you a rose; to you it's red. To a man lacking one of the photo-chemicals of the retina, it may not be red at all, but some other color. Yet in describing what you see, you both have told the truth."

"That's scientific. I concede it. A rose is red to me, but may not be at all to creatures with a somewhat different light-receptive apparatus. But where does that lead you?"

"I deny your statement that intellectual pleasure is the only real pleasure," Adam went on. "It's an unwarranted assumption, based on the nature of your own receptive apparatus. There are a many, many things that I enjoy as much or more."

Belgrade adjusted his pince-nez and looked at Adam with increased interest. "What, for instance?"

"Many of the pleasures of the senses. For instance, I never enjoyed anything more in my life that the fight with the Neanderthals, or the mammoth hunt nine or ten days ago."

"But that's barbarism, savagery."

"Perhaps so. But perhaps I'm a barbarian and a savage myself. The veneer over the blond beast may be thin. I enjoyed the little triumph of being able to shoot Tal-Eika's bow."

"That last was simply a matter of mechanics. Your arm is of slightly different construction than the Cro-Magnons', and permits a stronger draw."

"I guessed as much, but it didn't spoil my pleasure in the feat. You asked me where I find happiness, and I'm telling you. I find it in the trust these men put in me, in the wild, bloody life they live, in the

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adventure and thrill and physical excitement. I'd never grow tired of it. If I were to be exiled here, by some accident, and never be able to get back to civilization, I'd marry Dian, become chief of the tribe, and have as happy and interesting a life as I can imagine."

Belgrade gazed quietly out to sea. "I'll concede that's true," he said at last. "If you were marooned here, with no hope of getting out, you'd make the best of it and have the good time you describe. But the trouble is, Weismann, you are not marooned. The road is open. I'll be flying from here in an hour or so, back to the ship and home. And you'll go with me. You can't bring yourself to close the road and deliberately remain in exile."

These words seemed to go straight home. "I wish I had the courage," he protested at last.

"You haven't, so put it out of your mind. Be comforted by the pleasures waiting you at home." Sensing his advantage, Belgrade pounded in his points with increased earnestness and power. "The continuation of your work with Coral Fever; recognition by the world, and especially by your fellow medicos; your participation in the great movements of the time, in contrast with stone-age inertia existing here; and besides, all the fruits of civilization waiting for your hand."

"It would be hard to give them up, I know."

"You can't. What would you do without books, talk with your peers, travel, rapid means of communication, luxuries? You'd be dead."

"No, a long way from it. I've never known anyone to live more vividly than these Cro-Magnons."

Belgrade perceived he had taken the wrong track, and tried to get back on his course. "I mean that if you stay here—which of course you won't—the world will consider you dead."

"Yes, and Dian will consider me so if I leave here. To whom do I owe the most, Dian or the world?"

"That isn't the point. You owe the most to yourself; every human being does. That's realism, in contrast to romanticism. You mustn't throw away your life for a whim. But if you want to be romantic, remember what you owe the world in the way of work. Think of the good you can do in conquering Coral Fever."

"That's a different tune than you sang before, Belgrade. You were careful to tell me, the night we met, that any number of doctors could pick up my work where I laid it down."

"I didn't mean it, my boy. I had a stake to play for, that night. Really, your work is of great importance to science. I've heard it mentioned several times."

"It isn't so mightily important." Adam spoke in harsh tones. "You told me the truth, even though you prefer to deny it now. I've been thinking about it a good deal. There are thousands of doctors who can take it up where I laid it down. But who can do my work here?"

"Your work here? What do you mean?"

BELGRADE saw with misgivings that the youth's eyes were lighted up, as though emotion rather than cold reason had begun to rule his mind. "These people need a doctor," he went on. "There are hunting accidents almost every day. There's surgery to do — obstetrics — infections to fight. If I stayed here, I could save many lives. It would be a considerable factor in the preservation of the tribe."

"Nonsense, Weismann." Belgrade's thin-lipped smile was like a dash of cold water in Adam's face. "Don't be a romantic fool. These people have worked out their own destiny for three hundred centuries. You have only some thirty years to work out your own destiny."

"But I could save lives. The tribe would be stronger. And if the world finds out about them, and brings disease and all the other taints of civilization, I'd be in a position to help defend them."

"That may not happen for twenty years. You have my word that I'm going to try in every possible way to keep the secret. If they are found you can come here and fight for them. But, Weismann, this is all beside the point. I'm not thinking of the good of the tribe, but of your own good. I don't want you to make a tragic mistake. The worst mistake of all would be to stay here in a burst of heroism and renunciation, with the idea of serving these people. The fire would burn out in a little while, and there'd be nothing left but ashes, cold and gray. If you must stay, stay because you want to—because you are a cave-man at heart, unhappy in civilization, and this wild hunting life is your heritage—because you love Dian. Then at least you'll have something to live for."

And now Belgrade had found Adam's vulnerable point. He himself had not realized how straight was his shot. Adam's face darkened visibly. "I haven't the nerve," he said at last. "I suppose I'm a

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coward at heart. I think I could risk it, if it were a matter of duty—just as I risked my life before the German trenches—but you've thrown cold water on that; and I'm not sure enough of my own desires to stay here deliberately, for my own sake."

Belgrade was enough of a psychologist to understand this viewpoint. Adam could not cross the Rubicon by his own will; he needed the lash of some high-minded and altruistic purpose. The comparison he had made was clumsy but sound; he could never have faced German gunfire for the sake of adventure alone, but he had done so bravely under the added spur of duty.

"Then you'll go now and complete your farewells to the girl?" Belgrade urged.

"Yes, I'll go now. I'm licked, and I may as well admit it. There's no use dragging it out any further."

He spoke vigorously, but his face was ashen and his hands unsteady as he made his way to Dian. When she saw him, she gave a low cry. "Is it over, Tall One?"

"It's all over, Dian," he echoed solemnly. "We're starting right now. And I hope—I know—you'll forgive me."

"I don't understand 'forgive.' There is no word for it in our tongue. I will love you just the same, if that's what you mean. As long as I can see your face, in memory, I will never stop loving you. Dian cannot keep from wanting you just because you don't want her."

"I do want you. I will always want you, no matter what else comes to me. I will always love you, no matter what happens."

She smiled at him, a dim curling of her lips more poignant than tears, and turning away for a moment, gave an order in her own tongue to Gort-Chil, the acting chief. He at once turned toward the temple. "It is over, Tall One," he said. "Nothing remains but the old custom of farewell. Go with the Dark One to the winged ship. Dian will meet you there."

He turned away at once, got together his few effects, and went with Belgrade to the river bank. Neither man spoke of the coming journey; both seemed lost in thought. But they started, and looked quickly into each other's eyes, when they heard the great bronze gong begin to sound.

The blood mounted in Adam's face and tingled at the roots of his hair. He knew that this was one of the great moments of his life, but what was its meaning, and where it would lead he could not even imagine. The gong never spoke in vain. Indeed, it seemed to be the alarm of his own fate. Always it foretold him great events and changes. Now it was prophetic as never before. It marked the denouement of this wild drama of the South—a fulfilment of his life's plan—but whether the ending was happy or sad he did not know. He feared the worst. The gong had a mournful, fateful sound. After the first round, throbbing note, there fell a heavy silence.

He waited, holding his breath; beside him Belgrade stood with bent head, his sallow face showing repressed excitement. When the echoes had almost died away, the sound came again, deep and resonant. It was repeated a third time—a fourth—a fifth—

Belgrade whirled to his companion. "You understand now?"

"They're tolling—"

"Of course. It's for you, I suppose—they're mourning you as dead. Where did the custom come from, Weismann, I wonder? I thought it was modern—"

But Dian herself could not have told him this. She only knew that ever since the mountain-god had given bronze to the tribe, they had thus sounded the gong at the burial of the great chiefs. Only twice in the last quarter of a century had these solemn, solitary tones rolled out to awe the villagers—at the death of her mother, and of her father, Morrison Chief. Always it betokened national mourning.

"They're paying you the highest honor in the gift of the tribe," Belgrade said.

AT THE first gong, the sound of revelry in the village instantly died away. Like a bank of fog, the vast Antarctic silence dropped down. When Dian emerged from the temple, a moment later, and walked with bowed head down the village road toward the river, the whole tribe fell in fifty paces behind her. They, too, walked with bowed heads and solemn tread.

The girl was in full ceremonial dress. Her hair hung in two thick ropes in front of her shoulders, and about her temples was a gold band gleaming red in the sunlight. Around her waist was a thin rope of gold, from which hung, in front of her body, an ivory wand wonderfully carved with animal heads.

Belgrade gazed spellbound at this latter object. For the moment he was blind to everything else, all the wonder of this primitive pageant. "Do you see that staff she's wearing?" he whispered. "It is of tremendous interest. That, Doctor Weismann, is a *baton de commandement!*"

But Adam was not in the mood for

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learned discussion. "It seems to me a small matter, now."

"A small matter! Weismann, you disappoint me. Has your grief at parting with this girl made you lose the scientific viewpoint? Dozens of such batons have been found in European caves—relics of Aurignacian and Solutrian industry—I myself have seen them. Hers is made of ivory instead of reindeer horn like the others, but its identity is unmistakable. No one has known, until now, exactly what they were for. Plainly they are royal insignia—ceremonial staffs worn on state occasions by the princesses of the Cro-Magnon tribes."

The tribespeople paused a hundred yards from the river bank; Dian came slowly forward and stood before Adam. She opened a small ivory box containing what seemed to be blue mineral pigment, mixed with oil, and taking Adam's hands she made a blue mark on the back of each.

Adam did not fail to understand. She was enacting the ceremonial painting of the body of the dead. Then she gave him a small perforated shell, plainly another symbol of death, and drew back into the open space between him and the assembled tribe. In a low, clear voice she began the *Chon ig Mere*—the death-song that was old in the tribe when they still chased the reindeer on the banks of the Seine.

Probably the verses of the song were largely extemporaneous. Several times Adam caught the name Tal-Eika, showing that she was improvising on an old form. The first verse seemed to be addressed directly to him. She held out her arms to him, and she sang.

The entire tribe joined in the refrain. There were fully five hundred voices, harmonizing with indescribable beauty and power. Because of its slow tempo, Adam was able to catch most of the words. *"Vo quimo velja ig mere, vee decar puldi, vee verto quiri."* (We come to thy dwelling of death, our tears fall, our hearts cry.)

The second verse seemed to be addressed to the earth. Dian stood with bowed head, her arms pointing down. The third verse she faced the sea, holding out her arms to the gray desolate waste which would soon stretch between her and her lover. In the fourth verse, and the last, she raised her arms high over her head, and chanting earnestly, she made her plea to the skies.

Adam perceived that she was calling upon the three elements—earth, sea, and sky—to befriend her lover, and bear him safely to the far place he was bound. The gods of these elements, Re and Dian, and all the lesser gods of the waves, unknown deeps, storms, clouds, mountains, and other supernatural realms, she invoked in his behalf.

They were to bless him for her sake—the sake of one who was herself a goddess, according to her pagan beliefs—and to hold him safe as she herself wanted to hold him, in the love-warmth and safety of her arms. And, finally, they must not forgot to bear this spirit back to her, across the sea and the eternal ice, when the silence and solitude of the dwelling became too poignant, and her heart cried for him.

Belgrade's sallow face did not change expression, as he listened to this strange dirge, but there was a shine in his eyes Adam had not seen before. Adam himself was profoundly moved, not only by the girl's grief, but by the wild beauty of the song she was singing.

It would haunt him always. Always he would see this picture. Dian, in her ceremonial dress, her arms lifted to the sky, her face white with pain, her eyes bright with tears; behind her the assembled tribe, the last of a bygone glory; and surrounding them all, the vast wilderness of tundra, nameless rivers, and snow-capped hills. The girl's beauty stirred him as never before, perhaps because it was so bright in contrast with her dark grief. It seemed incredible that this splendid pagan, her hair shining like spun gold, her limbs gleaming, her furs and gold ornaments taking the sun, could know sorrow.

In her song she was telling him what she could not express in speech—young love, ardent with the unslaked fires of the robust outdoor people, and her childlike grief at the parting. It was *Chon ig Mere*, the chant of death, yet it was a song of love. She sang of her thirsting lips, her arms yearning to hold him, her breast crying for him. She chanted of her lost hopes—of longings unfulfilled and dreams defeated.

Adam could not understand the words, but the mood and deeper meaning of the song came straight home. No wonder it was one of the primal songs of life. And it was particularly appealing to a man of his type, primal, full-blooded, and free. Yes, he himself was little better than a savage, as Belgrade had told him. The veneer of civilization is thin on all men, particularly so on him.

Art is a mirror in which one sees his own soul. In the primeval art of this death chant, Adam stood self-revealed. It was

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not his intellect that showed him the way now, but the inexplicable wisdom of the heart, which is emotion. In one flash of inspiration he understood himself better than in a lifetime of studious introspection. He knew his rightful place, his true need, his destiny.

The long-drawn minor notes ended in a wail, infinitely wild and strange. Thrills ran up and down Adam's back and raced over his scalp. Dian came forward to say a last word of farewell.

"Good-by, Tall One," she told him. Still her voice held steady; she was not sobbing, and the only sign of her grief was the pallor on her face and the sparkle of tears in her eyes. She drew his head down to hers and kissed him on the forehead, on both cheeks and finally on the lips.

Whether there was symbolical meaning in this action Adam did not know or care; he only knew that Dian was in his arms again. He was half-delirious anyway, his face lighting up, his eyes fairly blazing. His arms encircled her and he answered her caresses.

There was no grief in his embrace, but love of her and of life, regeneration and fulfilment. This, and the jubilant leap of his heart against hers, made her fling back with a cry. Wildly, she searched his face.

"What is it?"

"I'm not going," he said clearly.

Belgrade reached and grasped his sleeve. "What's that you say, Weismann?"

Holding Dian with his free arm, in breathless excitement, Adam turned to his companion. "I'm not going with you. You'll have to fly back to the ship alone. I'm going to stay here, with Dian—in the country where I belong."

Belgrade looked at his eyes, and knew he was speaking the truth. There was no use arguing with destiny. "It's quite possible that this is a favorable environment for your species," the great scientist declared at last, thoughtfully, yet with a touch of warm humor. Carefully he adjusted his pince-nez. "I hate to lose you, Adam"—this was the first time he had called him so—"but I was rather expecting it, and under the circumstances, I can't say that I blame you."

EVEN when the plane began to roar, preparatory to departure, Adam's spirits did not fall. When it soared away, into the northern sky, naught that was his departed with it, not even his happiness or his hope. He saw it go without regrets, knowing at last that he had not made a mistake but had found his true place. The last Belgrade saw of him he was standing among his tribespeople, waving with a gesture wide and free.

"I'll tell the men on the ship that you are lost and can't be found," Belgrade had said just before he took off, in the last moment of warm-hearted farewell. "That is more or less true. And you needn't be afraid that I'll break my promise concerning these people here—I'll do everything I can to keep them from being discovered by the world. Finally, I'll try to come back in a few years, and see how you're getting on. Then if you want to change your mind, you can."

"I won't change my mind during the reign of Dian Chulee," was the significant reply.

In three days' time, he would stand with Dian beside the First Fire, and say the Old Words. It was not merely a tribal tradition, but almost a law of life, that they should mate on the full moon. The tides would then reach their extreme height, signifying fulfilment of victory.

Thereafter, he would take his place as tribal chief, and live the wild adventurous life he had chosen. With his savage followers and more savage dogs, he would stand to the mammoth in the far valleys; in his kayak he would chase the seal on the glassy bays. It would be a strange existence for Doctor Weismann, the recipient of honorary degrees from two universities, and the foremost authority on an Oriental disease, but for Adam it was glory—destiny—freedom.

Yet Doctor Weismann would not forsake him utterly. He would remain to counsel him, to check his more barbarous impulses, to make him remember the outside world which sometime might call him back. Thus the whole tribe would be benefited by his example. Besides, he would bind up their wounds, care for their sick, and help them in hundreds of ways in their struggle for survival.

When Adam stood at the door of the igloo, his mate's arm around him, and looked out on the vast hunting ground that was his kingdom, he was not sad but exultant. A new vitality, a keener sense of his own being, struck through his body and brain. He was not the lawful child of civilization, but a throw-back to the Stone Age.

He had not gone into exile; instead he had come home.

Adam, the youth, the primal man, had entered into his heritage.

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MASTERS OF FANTASY

John Taine—Reaper of the Rainbow—Born 7 February 1883

No tales have ever borne more colorful titles than those of John Taine: "The Purple Sapphire", "The Gold Tooth", "White Lily", "Black Goldfish" . . . His drama of 1990, "Green Fire", has been produced as a play. His own favorite of his works is "The Cosmic Geoids".

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The name John Taine has for over a generation been a guarantee of a top-notch adventure in imagination, and lovers of imaginative literature may well point with pride to this Scotch-American scientifictioneer who stands on the pinnacle of fantasy fame.

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"Such things can't be—but there she was, before our eyes!"

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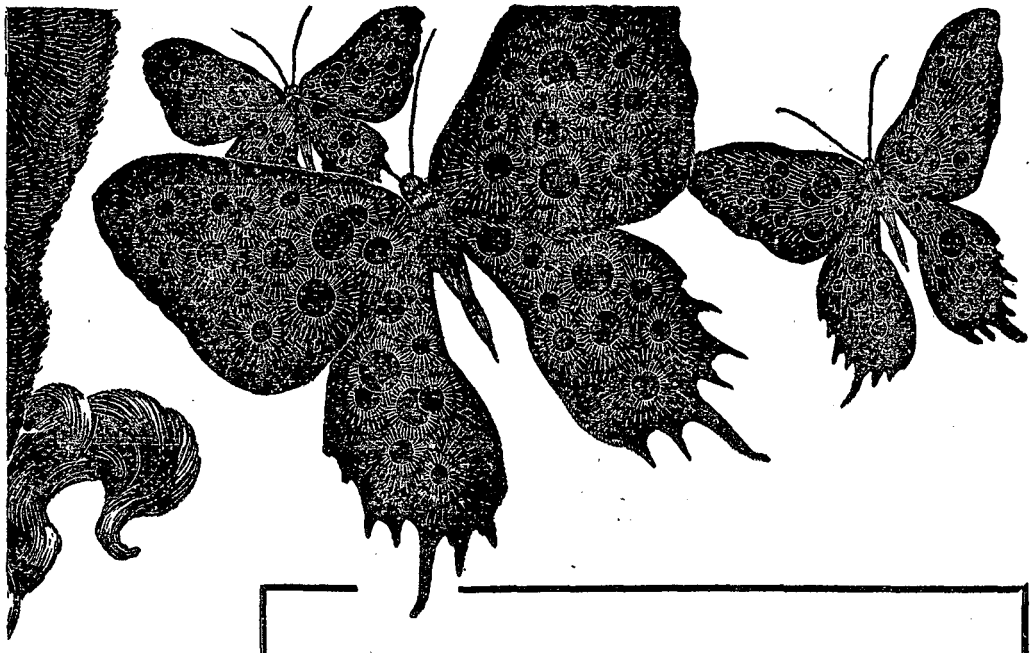

BLACK BUTTERFLIES

By Elmer Brown Mason

The way was strewn with the dead who had dared seek out the secret of those jungle depths . . . but the lure was gold at safari's end, and the priceless wings of the sable butterfly no man had ever caught. . . .

CHAPTER I

THE MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

IT WAS the obstinacy of Trevor Dillingame, the stark, sheer obstinacy and conceit of the man in his power to handle any situation, solve any jungle secret, that brought us under the shadow.

'Tis a fault of the English. Where a Scotchman is firm, an Englishman is obstinate.

Whereas a Scotchman simply realizes his powers, an Englishman puts no limit to what *he* may accomplish.

Not that I didn't like the man. Losh, who could help it from the mere good looks of him? though I do not put undue faith in male beauties. But he was such a whale of a laddie, six feet tall, four across the shoulders, cold blue eyes, tread as light as *plandok*, the tiny mouse-deer; and big hands, that could crack a cocoanut or hold a butterfly without bruising its wings.

Butterflies were his line, and he knew as much as anyone in the world about

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them. I'm a cautious man and I'll go no further; he knew as much as anyone in the whole world about butterflies.

'Twas in the low swamp belt of the coast of British Borneo that it all began. We were collecting pretty nearly everything for a lot of stay-at-home scientists who could afford to have the jungle wonders sent to them to be tagged with Latin names at their leisure. It did pay, but it was hard work, dangerous work. The jungle leeches sucked blood from every uncovered inch of our bodies and our flesh was raw from mosquito bites. There were poisonous insects, snakes, and more snakes, and then the heat—moist, deadening; sapping your vitality like the final rounds of a long, long fight.

Shifting uneasily from foot to foot, and tearing away the jungle leeches that would pop onto their bare skins, three little Dyaks stood in the checkered shadows. Trevor Dillingame was bending over a great flower-stalk, around the top of which were symmetrically clustered the red and black caterpillars, with their one creamy segment, of *Cethosia Hypsea,* creating a living, wriggling bloom.

A red thing sailed through the air—a bird, I thought—and settled in a low nipa palm. I saw it was a tree frog at the very moment that a green-and-gold whiplike strand swung down from the tree-tops and caught it in its narrow jaws.

"Chalaka, ular Tuan!" (Very wicked snake, sir), shrieked one of the Dyaks.

From the olive green of a rattan thicket stepped out a woman, covered with wreaths of jasmine, the two wings of a coal-black butterfly pasted on her forehead. Her hands flew to the slender neck of the snake, twisted quickly, and the head with its red prey was left between her fingers.

Dillingame stood stock still, staring at her. Laughing up into his face, she flung away the serpent's head, stripped off a jasmine garland, cast it about his neck—and was gone.

Both Trevor and I knew enough of the mythology of Borneo to realize at once that we had looked upon a *hantus,* one of the spirits that lived on the top of Mount Kina Balu and reappeared as the female priests of the country.

That was all very well; but such things can't be—they *aren't,* whether we had seen one or not; and the woman had been very beautiful.

"Yon's a bonnie lassie who favored you with the flowers," I remarked as Dillingame began to strip off the garland.

"That I leave to your Scotch susceptibility, Andy Freeman," he answered. "But did you get a good look at those butterfly wings she wore on her forehead? An eight-inch spread to each of them, and black as jet! A new species, a new genus—perhaps even a new family of Lepidoptera. What do you suppose a specimen of that butterfly would bring in Paris or London? A fortune!"

As we talked, we picked our way carefully along the back trail toward where a boat waited us on the water of a sluggish stream that ran to the coast. We did not expect to see the Dyaks again; they had fled in wild panic, but we did hope my Chinaman would still be there and would have enough knowledge of the channel to pilot us to the sea without becoming lost in some backwater. Besides, it was getting dark, and a night in a Borneo swamp jungle is enough to make the most seasoned explorer shudder.

The boat and Chinaman were waiting, as we had hoped; but as for getting out in the darkness, Lee San positively refused to attempt to guide us. Outside of the great probability of being lost he claimed that our craft would arouse countless devils of the night by disturbing the waters.

Strange cuss, that Chinaman! He had been with me for over two years in Sumatra, Sarawak and Dutch Borneo, and never before had pretexed superstition for disobeying an order. He was unusually intelligent, too, and I had given him a large share of my confidence, and gained much interesting inside native information in return. The Chinese are the traders of all that part of the world and know more about the Dyaks, Muruts and other tribes of Borneo than any white man.

We poled the boat out into midstream and dropped anchor, preparing to make the best of a bad situation. Fortunately there was enough dry wood on board to build a good fire on the dirt hearth so we could boil some water and attend to our countless leech wounds with ammonia. Of course the light lured hordes of bloodthirsty mosquitoes, but we stoked up on quinine (Lee preferred an opium pill) and smoked hard beneath our skeeter nets.

SLEEP was impossible. Even if the heat had not put it out of the question the jungle noises would have kept a dead man awake. From a hundred yards away, as regular as the striking of a clock, a bull alligator roared out his love call; *samburs,* the big blue deer of Borneo belled in the

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distance; great fruit-bats cut the air with a mighty swish of their leathery wings; and underneath all came the chorus of tragedy from the forest floor, the agonized squeak of a small rodent as it was borne off in triumphant jaws, the snarl of some cat animal that had missed its spring, the ceaseless snuffle of the rooting wild hogs.

"Whisky," I said to Trevor—it's bad stuff in the tropics, but the night was unendurable—and he passed the bottle.

"Quinine," he demanded, and we both took ten more grains.

In the bow of the boat Lee San's teeth began to chatter.

"What's the matter, boy?" I sang out.

"No got mo' opium," he answered.

"Come here and drink some whisky," I ordered.

"No can," he objected—the Chinese doesn't often touch it, doesn't seem to like it—but he came down to the stern, just the same, and swallowed the big slug I had ready for him.

Silence for a long time, silence that every one of us wanted to break, but each was waiting for the other. Finally Dillingame's thoughts broke out in a torrent of words.

"Andy, how could that woman be real?—and yet you *know* she was! How did she dare grab that deadly tree-snake, that can turn and bite in its own skin, and twist off its head? And why did she do it? Where did those butterfly wings come from? You know no such insect exists in lower Borneo; you know we, or others, would have found it were it here. And if it came from the mountain country, what were its wings doing in a lowland nipa swamp on a girl's forehead? I'd give all we have collected on this trip for one specimen of that black butterfly!"

"So would I," I replied, ignoring his questions, since they were unanswerable. "But I think you are on the right track. It must be a mountain species or we would have found it. Pass the whisky."

We all had another drink. Lee did not demur this time.

"I move, unless we are down with fever in the morning, that we go back, look for the woman, and, if we find her, try to buy those wings—or at least try to discover where they came from. A black butterfly, Andy—"

"Lee savvy black butterfly," chanted the Chinaman. "You want know, you no tell!"

"Sure not," I agreed, and the Englishman grunted an affirmation.

I shan't try to repeat Lee's exact words, for the story filled the entire night; but this is the meat of what he told us. Long before the English took over North Borneo, before Sir James Brooke came to Sarawak, even before the Dutch had seized their portion of the island, the Chinese looked upon all Borneo as their own private treasure-house. From it they exported rattan, teak, precious and semi-precious stones, and gold—quantities of gold—the source of which no Aryan nation has ever been able to discover in after years. And the power, head, moving spirit of the Chinese in those days (as now) was centered in a Tong—a Tong so mighty that it had no name.

The emblem of this Tong was a portion of a butterfly wing, never a whole wing, but just a fragment; and this fragment was always round and always black. Even now the gold that came out of British Borneo passed only through the hands of the Chinese—the Chinese that belonged to the old, old Tong that had the round piece of black butterfly's wings for emblem.

The whisky passed back and forth many times during this recital, a strange one, indeed, to come from an Oriental (they never speak of their secret societies), and Dillingame, leaning toward me, whispered:

"He's lying!"

"'Tis the whisky," I whispered back.

"No lie, no whisky!" vehemently protested Lee San—his ears must have been devilish sharp. "China boy *pantong* (taboo)—mus' die in twenty day for makee Tong mad. No sendum body back to ancestors, jus' scatterum ashes. So no care what come. Tellum tluth!"

"Where do the butterfly emblems come from?" asked Trevor.

"My no savvy. Way off, mebbeso. Seeum only in Blunei town."

A terrible rumpus broke out on the bank of the stream. Gruntings, howls, roars, screams. The light was just breaking, and we could dimly discern vague shapes dancing frantically about. Suddenly the sun shot over the horizon, and we saw a great python lurch into the water, leaving a crowd of big, frantically chattering, long-tailed red monkeys on the bank.

It rained dismally as we retraced our trail of the day before. The *mise en scene* was unchanged. The head of the tree-snake, already half decomposed, lay on the ground, but the red tree-frog was gone from between its jaws. The prickly thicket of rattan whence the *hantus* had come,

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and into which she had disappeared, was as impenetrable as a solid wall of barbed wire .

I lifted up my voice and called. A deer snorted near by, a flight of hornbills sawed the air with their heavy wings. No other sound broke the silence save the drip, drip, drip of the wet jungle.

Morose, and hardly believing what we had seen the day before, heavy from the night's vigil, we retraced our steps to the boat and dropped down stream.

BRUNEI is built on piles and roofed with thatch, and has all of twenty thousand inhabitants. A globe-trotter once called it "the Venice of the East." There is an English quarter, of course, with a resident who lives in card indexes and considers it low to have anything to do with the natives.

We were not of his favorites. He told us on one occasion that our lack of dignity in mingling with the aborigines lowered the caste of every white man in the East. Dillingame promptly chucked him into the water, and he retaliated by revoking all our collecting permits. It was a nuisance to have to forge others; and then, too, we spelled his name wrong on them. The first real government white man we met in the interior laughed at us, corrected the spelling and passed us on.

It was humiliating, though.

In the Chinese quarter, where all the business was done, they knew us well and, as near as you can gage the feelings of Orientals, liked us. We shipped all our stuff through them, and they cashed our drafts and even lent us money.

Among the Kadyans and Dyaks, in the native quarter, we were rather lords. Dillingame crumpled up all their wrestlers and astounded them with feats of strength. I told them stories in the different vernaculars.

There is absolutely no use in a white man trying to match wits with a yellow one if he wants to find out anything. I went straight to the biggest Chinaman of the lot, told him where and how we had seen the black butterfly wings, and asked him point-blank whence they came. He answered me with apparent frankness that he did not believe such an insect existed today, though it may have in the past. Goods (he did not specify what kind) that came from the mountainous country around Kina Balu often were accompanied by a fetish in the form of a black butterfly's wing, but that wing was made of paper—and to prove it, he gave me one.

This, to my mind, closed the incident.

Dillingame, who had been getting together supplies and packing our stuff for shipment, greeted me cheerfully.

"Hello, dead man," he called, "I have just been informed that anyone who sees a *hantus* is due to cash in the same quarter of the moon. One of our Dyaks ran amuck when the three got back, and was hacked to pieces by his friends; the other two have been gloriously full of arrack ever since. What did you find out about the butterfly?"

I repeated what the Chinaman had told me, taking out the paper wing and laying it before him.

I think I said before that Englishmen are obstinate. Trevor Dillingame absolutely refused to believe a word of it. He pointed out that the paper wing showed an arrangement of veins and a frenulum quite different from that of any known species of butterfly, and stoutly maintained that such a species did exist and the paper counterpart was just a typical oriental plot to throw us off. I tried to show him that there could be no reason why the Chinese would object to us sashaying all over the island after butterflies, since we always attended strictly to our own business; but he wasn't to be budged from his plot theory.

"I'm going to have that butterfly if I rake over all the mountains in Borneo," he announced, "and I'll bet you I will have it within a year—or rather that we will; because you are naturally coming along."

"You mean you *may* get it, not *will* get it," I corrected.

"I mean I *shall* get it," he insisted. And yet people say the Scotch don't understand the difference between shall and will!

* * *

Brunei is civilized in that it has one white hell where foregather the captains and mates of the trading ships, globe-trotters and men who have made their pile in the black country; in short, every white who has the price. You pay your money and you get what you order. To a certain point you do as you please. Beyond that point a Malay kriss ends the evening's entertainment and the tide takes you out to sea without trouble to your friends.

A Chinaman ran the place, of course. He called it the House of Unending Happiness and Delight. White men called it the Devil's Club.

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Neither Dillingame nor I is a saint. We like our bit of fun as well as anyone. 'Twas to the Devil's Club we planned to go that evening; first to talk to one of Rothschild's orchid-collecting agents then to enjoy whatever happened along. We didn't anticipate much from the agent. He was an evil little rat of a Portuguese who bought low and, in all probability, turned in his purchases at four times what they cost him. Also he was a careful lad with the money, never known to buy a drink could he help it.

Lee San had laid out clean white clothes for us in our nipa-thatched hut, and seemed to be lingering about with something on his mind that he lacked the courage to unload. I gave him a lead, and, explaining that only nineteen days more of existence remained to him according to the sentence of the Tong, he asked for his pay covering the full period.

It's fatal to pay a Chinaman in advance, so I naturally refused and suggested, as a substitute, that he come with us into the interior, thus probably running away from his fate.

The idea of escape had evidently never occurred to him—Tongs even do their thinking for most Chinamen—and I left him to turn it over in his mind.

The entertainment furnished at the Devil's Club is rather unique. Everything starts with a good dinner, of course, and plenty of drinks. Then comes gambling on a rickety roulette wheel; fan tan, or just drinking. If none of these amusements appeals to you, you watch the show. Dyak girls, teeth blackened and ornamented with tiny gold stars let into the enamel, ears bored around the edges with holes from which dangle rings and pendants, wave their long hands, the nails dyed to a crimson, and dance to the slow beat of the native instruments. Chinese girls, always smiling out of their slanting eyes, play toy-like banjos and never cease to wonder at European kisses. Perhaps there are wrestlers, or two sailors from rival ships put on the gloves and fight to a knockout while men from every corner of the earth stand around the ring.

These various kinds of evenings, with their next mornings' headaches, were old stories to us; but this evening furnished something surprisingly new. Gomez, the Portuguese, not only invited us to dinner, but actually paid for it. Then, instead of going into the back room to smoke opium, he sat out with us watching the dancing and talking about everything under the sun. 'Twas plain that the lad wanted something from us, but to save me I couldn't figure out what it was.

Finally, as the crowd thinned out, dropping into or being carried to their boats, he suggested that he accompany us to our own hut, as he had something of importance to take up with us.

Lee San set out the whisky, and as soon as he withdrew, the Portuguese hauled a little package out of his inside pocket.

"Can't handle this alone," he remarked as he began to remove the paper wrapping, "but there should be enough in it for all three of us," and he laid a porcupine quill and a small round object, about the size of a half crown, on the table.

I picked up the transparent quill. The weight together with the color of the contents told me at once that it was filled with gold. Dillingame gave a low whistle over the round article and handed it to me. It was a kind of a locket, holding beneath its thin film of glass a round section cut from the wing of a black butterfly.

"Where did you get these, Gomez?" I demanded.

"What does it matter as long as I know where the gold came from, and we can get more?"

"It matters so much that if you want us in with you, you'll have to tell us."

"I found them on the body of a Murut who had been bitten by a snake," he answered sulkily. "He told me, before he died, that he brought gold down from the mountains each year, that there was plenty of it there."

We hadn't the slightest desire to take Gomez with us, but other considerations besides our personal feelings had to enter into the calculations. It costs like blazes to get to the back country; mainly because one has to carry all the rice for the porters, as well as everything else, and the Portuguese seemed to have lots of cash. Of course we realized the source of at least part of this wealth. Not for a moment did we believe that a single quill of gold was all that had been taken from the dead Murut, any more than we swallowed the story about the poor devil having been bitten by a snake. Gomez had no reputation save that of an excellent shot and being death quick with a knife.

We insisted on one reservation, namely, that all entomological specimens should be our exclusive property—oddly enough it was the black butterfly that appealed to Dillingame's and my imagination even more than the prospect of gold; and then

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went into the project, each taking a third.

IT'S devilish hard getting into the interior, but it can be done by determined men who know the jungle. A couple of weeks later found us under the shadow of Kina Balu, its fourteen thousand foot summit towering high above us. The natives had not bothered us at all; indeed, we hadn't seen much of them, and our supplies were holding out splendidly.

All that day we toiled up the old course of the Tarnpassuk, collecting as we went, and we certainly did well. Everywhere were beautiful green papilos—the Saranak Beauty—and frail, black-spotted *Hestidae,* while lovely, velvety black-and-green male *brookcani* went swiftly dancing by. Also the orchids were something unbelievable; *grammatophyllums,* golden-brown spotted flowers on stout two-yard-long spikes; a greenish-yellow flowered *dendrobium;* clusters of tubular *aesclynanthus* like scarlet jewels beneath the great, leathery, aroid leaves; and the enormous moth orchids with their hundred snowy flowers.

Already we could easily see a profit on the trip from what we had gathered if we continued to do even half as well, and were all as happy as crickets.

That evening we camped on the bank of a half-dry stream, and while Dillingame and I figured out how much further we could cut down the loads for the mountain climb, Gomez washed the sands for gold—his favorite amusement, no matter where we stopped. Lee San (he had accepted my suggestion to accompany us in defiance of his Tong) was cooking our supper, and the jungle was as quiet as a high-limit poker game.

Night came quickly, as it does in the East; a black curtain rolled suddenly across the sky through which the stars would later punch their twinkling holes, and we gathered around the fire. From far off in the jungle came the bellowing of wild cattle, a flying lemur cut a straight line against the horizon across the curves of the circling bats.

Then, in the Ida'an tongue, and with the sudden crash of an orchestra, came a roaring chorus:

"Little red flames that flit so fast,
Through wet, green leaves till day is past—
Little red flames in the tree-tops shine
Where the hungry, green-gold serpents twine—

"One and all, great and small,
We carry you up the mountain tall,
Down where the jungle's hot and dim,
Under the world's far, farthest rim,
To HER, to HER
Where red waters stir,
And the lilies float
O'er the gods demure."

Weapons ready, we stepped out of the circle of the fire and stood in the shadowy edge of the jungle. The moon swept up over the tree-tops and down its silvery path filed a long procession. They were Ida'ans from the mountains, the taint of them on the breeze, and each of the fifty men was loaded down with a wicker basket whence came a volume of sound like the splashing of countless, tiny waterfalls.

Again crashed out the song:

"Little red flames that feel as cool
To burning hands as the shaded pool—
Little red flames through the jungle fling
The breath of freshness while you sing—

"One and all, great and small,
Never cease your piping call,
Down where the jungle's hot and dim,
Under the world's far, farthest rim,
While you go to HER
Where the red waters stir
And the lilies float
O'er the gods demure."

"They are going to, not coming from, the mountains," whispered Gomez, "so they haven't any gold. Let's stay hidden."

"Want to know what is in those baskets. They'd see our fires anyway," spoke up Dillingame, and stepped out of the shadow toward the last of the passing men.

It was an idiotic thing to do—I don't believe in hunting trouble—but I followed him, of course. The entire column halted. It was probably the first white man they had ever seen; certainly the first wearing khaki, puttees and an immaculate helmet, and I called for the *orang-kaya* (head man).

A little wizened Chinaman was pushed forward, whom I proceeded to interrogate sternly on the purpose of the expedition just as though I were a government officer.

I got away with it, of course. They were returning from a religious pilgrimage into the lowlands after having washed away their sins in some sacred stream. I said I got away with it, but not with bells on. Indeed, the Chinaman seemed somewhat inclined to interrogate me as to our destination and purpose in that part of the country, a tendency that I promptly suppressed. I also gave him orders to camp well away from our party and not to permit his men to stray in our direction.

During this conversation the fresh sound as though of running water continued to

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come from the baskets the natives were carrying. Trevor stepped to the nearest one and threw up the lid. It was loosely packed full of green leaves, among which sang hundreds of little red tree frogs.

BACK in camp I cussed the Englishman proper for advertising our presence to the natives, and we speculated in regard to the red tree frogs. I knew the Ida'ans considered rats a table delicacy, and the frogs might be in the same category. The strange part was that an expedition should penetrate into the lowlands to collect them—they aren't found far from the coast—and that the expedition should be in charge of a Chinaman.

After all, it did not concern us directly, and gradually, one by one, we dropped off beneath our mosquito nets. The jungle noises blurred from separate sounds into a droning whole, I was drowsily conscious of a pair of large, bright, yellow eyes—a slow loris my brain lethargically telegraphed—and I slept.

I woke, with the first morning light, to the song of birds. The sun popped up over the horizon, and the chorus from the tree-tops increased to an ecstasy of harmony. In prompt contrast to all this joyousness came a wail of fright from behind our tents, followed by shouts of surprise and fear from the porters.

Jumping into my boots, clad only in pajamas, and an automatic in my hand, I rushed toward the sound of the disturbance. Lee San, surrounded by the Muruts, was raising his voice to high heaven and holding his upper garment away from his body—and from that upper garment fluttered a long piece of paper covered with Chinese characters and signed with a crudely inked butterfly's wing.

"Stop that fool howling," I yelled angrily, tearing away the fluttering strip that was evidently the cause of his anguish, "and tell me what this all means!"

"Lee San on'y t'lee day to live! That Tong sign. No can get 'way!" and he roared anew.

Grabbing him by the throat I choked the noise back into his gullet.

"Where did that laundry ticket come from?" I demanded.

"Pin to clo' when Lee sleep," he moaned.

I was sorry for the little Chinaman, of course; but couldn't let him go on bawling forever. It might stampede my dozen porters any minute. Naturally I surmised that one of them was in Tong employ, and had pinned Lee's sentence to him while he slept. I should have liked mightily to ferret out the guilty one, but didn't dare take the risk of the bunch quitting on me.

Pretending a wrath I was far from feeling and threatening Lee San with immediate death, I sent the men to cooking their breakfasts and then returned to my tent.

We made good progress the next two days, passing several Ida'an villages, the inhabitants of which viewed us with an uninterested stolidity that made me rather nervous, and on the second night camped just below the timber line of Kina Balu.

Gomez claimed that gold came from the western slope, but it was easier to go over the mountain than to try to thread the impenetrable jungle around its base.

We took many rare butterflies, those days, including the *Euthalia magnolia*, known only from Kina Balu; another beautiful local species with a six-inch spread of velvety blackness and a broad band of pea-green across the wings; and then, just before pitching camp, I netted an entirely new species, soft gray with little squares, as though of isinglass, set in its wings, and both veination and frenulum identical with the round fragment of black wing that Gomez had shown us in the little locket.

We had out this talisman and compared the two—after which I slipped the little round thing into my pocket—and it was easy to see that we had a species for an entirely new genus; two species, if we secured the black butterfly. In spite of the rain that began to fall that night Dillingame and I were jubilant, though we could not get Gomez to enthuse—he was after more valuable game.

The altitude and cold rid us of mosquitoes and we turned in early in anticipation of a full night's sleep. Scarcely had I closed my eyes, however, when I was wide awake again and sitting up. Clear as a bell, through the darkness, came the whistle of a kite—and kites don't fly at night—to be answered from the other side of the camp by the drawling snarl of a tiger cat, followed by the unmistakable sound of a girl's laugh.

On my feet in a flash, I stole out beyond the light of the fire and lay down in the shadow, straining my eyes through the blackness. It had stopped raining and not even an insect disturbed the perfect stillness. Suddenly, to my right, a single voice broke into song—a voice so filled with contemptuous raillery that it made me grit my teeth in anger.

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*"Orang, puteh,** what dost seek
Toward Kina Balu's lofty peak
Where the dead troop free
'Neath Lugundi's tree
In the sacred lake
Whence the spirits flee? . . ."

I raised up on my left elbow and fired twice in the direction of the sound. A mocking laugh came back to me, then silence, save for the waking of the camp. Quieting the men, I told Dillingame and Gomez not to bother me with questions that night, and, turning in, slept till daylight.

CHAPTER II

THE TALISMAN

IT was deadly cold in the morning and Lee's teeth chattered as he built our fire. I sent him over to wake the porters, only to have him back in a second, hands trembling and face ashy white.

"Come," was all he could say. "Come!"

My twelve porters lay their feet to the dead embers, and on each man's left cheek was stamped in black a butterfly's wing.

There was no holding them, of course, when they awoke and saw the mysterious emblem that had been placed on their very flesh while they slept. Furthermore the marks would not wash off—left an indelible stain that seemed to penetrate the pores of the skin. I threatened, bribed, cajoled, all in vain; and, accepting half what I had promised them for wages, my Muruts fled down the mountain.

Nice fix we were in! All our goods and chattels dumped high on the side of Kina Balu, and no one to carry them! There was only one thing to do: go back to the nearest Ida'an village and hire local carriers—and a villainous lot they proved to be when I finally managed to get ten of them at an exorbitant wage in cloth. Then it was noon before we got started again, and our nerves were on razor edge.

Lee San helped the situation by bewailing the fact that it was the last day on earth allotted to him by the Tong, and stuck so close to me that I finally lost my temper and made him lead the column.

Over the shoulder of Kina Balu the character of the country changed. Jungle grew high up a mountain slope so precipitous that we never should have been able to descend had it not been for a narrow, winding trail. There were no butterflies, the giant trees meeting overhead and shutting out the light, but never have I seen such a riot of orchids, or so many gorgeously colored birds.

My porters balked twice, demanding their wages as having gone far enough; and the second time I was forced to make good my threatenings by knocking one flat. It was beastly hot and sticky, the ground fairly crawled with leeches, and the trail was cut every hundred yards by wild pig runs, along which we three times went astray.

I joined Lee San and we kept well ahead of the column, progressing downward as best we could and clearing the way. The Chinaman had recovered his spirits with the realization that sundown would see the end of his fears—Tong law considers a man dead, no matter whether he is or not, after the date for his execution has passed, and no longer molests him.

The trail became narrower and narrower. I stepped over a liana that stretched across about a foot from the ground, and turned as Lee brought down his jungle knife to sever it. There was a swish overhead and a weighted spear plunged down, entering the man's neck, piercing the length of his body through the thigh, its point going into the ground and holding him upright.

Lee San opened his mouth in an attempt to speak, his head flopped forward, and death claimed him before the words could come.

Dazed for the moment, I stood motionless, my eyes on the spear shaft along which slowly dribbled round drops of blood. A ray of sunlight filtered down from above and played over the dead man. Sable black, two feet from wing tip to wing tip, an enormous butterfly darted straight for the crimsoning spear, poising against it with swiftly fanning wings.

I grabbed with my bare hand, but it dodged, circling about my wrist, to relight on the dead man's bleeding shoulder. Again I lunged for it.

There was a rustle behind me and an arm went around my neck, flinging me flat on the trail. Beautiful as an orchid in her wreaths of fragrant jasmine, a woman caught the sable butterfly between her fingers, jumped lightly over my body, and disappeared into the jungle, while through the great tree trunks came a low, mocking laugh.

Half stunned, I stumbled to my feet, tearing away a great leech that had fastened to my lip, and the first of the porters came down the trail.

*Stranger in our midst.

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It was a trap for wild hogs that Lee San had blundered into, and I sprang two more of them, with a long pole cut for the purpose, within the next mile.

We buried the Chinaman beside the trail—tropical jungles do not admit of delay in such matters—and I certainly did feel cast down over the loss of such a good cook. Also he had been with me over two years and I was very well used to him.

I did not mention the sable butterfly or the woman before Gomez, saving up the incident for Dillingame alone. Perhaps this was because of the rather humiliating rôle I had played. Anyway, I did not say anything about it at the time to either of them.

Two miles farther down the trail the jungle opened up into a park of enormous teak trees with no underbrush on the forest floor; just a meadow of short grass with a stream running through the middle, on the bank of which we camped. Being completely devoid of confidence in the porters, I had all the waterproof-canvas-wrapped loads piled in a great heap, pitched the two tents, one on each side, and then the three of us matched to see who should cook. Gomez got stuck, much to his disgust; so he had to forego his customary evening's amusement of washing for gold.

Hardly had we finished our supper, and a rotten bad meal it was, when the Ida'ans appeared and asked pay for the full week I had hired them with an additional bonus to the one I had manhandled. As is always the case with natives, and inspired by arrack, they started at the top of the pitch beginning with demands and working down until they reached the pleading stage.

Their argument was based on the fact that we had not climbed Kina Balu as they expected, and as had other white men, but had led them down into the Land of Blood where the spirits stole men's souls. Their spokesman assured me that no one who went into this jungle ever came back, that it was the abode of spirits and devils who, like gigantic leeches, fed on the blood of the living.

In the end I drove them to their fire, and we turned in, agreeing to keep watch, turn by turn, during the night. Dillingame took the first period and I went promptly to sleep.

Then I began to dream. The *hantus* woman stepped out of a rattan thicket and laughed up into Trevor's face. He gathered her into his arms and bent his lips to hers, when a flock of great, black butterflies swept down, forming a cloud about them. I beat at them with my hands to reach the voice calling, "Andy! Andy!"

Someone was shaking me by the shoulder. "Wake up, for God's sake, Andy, wake up!" whispered Dillingame. "This place is enchanted!"

OUTSIDE the tent, it was light as day. A luminous mass came hurtling through the air and fell at my feet. I kicked it and a great fungus broke into a thousand pieces, each glowing with fox fire. More fungi were hurled into the open space about the camp. I rolled down several of the canvas-covered loads and we crouched behind them. The Ida'ans, near the dead fire, were standing huddled in a close group whence came no sound.

The shower of luminous fungi ceased. There was a pop like a champagne cork leaving the bottle and one of the porters staggered and fell on his face, a tiny arrow quivering in his forehead.

"Lie down, you fools!" I yelled, and pumped a bullet into the edge of the jungle. A shower of tiny arrows rattled among the packs. I picked up one and showed its point, smeared with some pitchy poison, to Trevor.

"No use staying here to be shot down like trapped hogs," he snapped. "Let's make a break for cover. Where is Gomez?"

"Here," came the little man's voice from my elbow. "We're in a tight fix, is it not?"

"We're in all of that," I answered. "Draw their fire, and after the shower of arrows, grab a pack and get into the jungle near them. I'll toss one of those flares we brought for trading where they seem thickest and we'll try to get enough to give them a permanent scare."

One of the Ida'ans rose cautiously to his knees. Came the pop of a blow gun and he went down screaming, his hands to his face. Trevor fired in the general direction whence the arrow came. A storm of the little darts rattled about us, and then we were all running, packs held before us, toward the edge of the jungle.

Safe in its shadow, I touched a match to the flare and flung it whence had come the last volley. There was a yell of fear, and we turned loose a bunch of black outlined figures, long bamboo blow-guns in their hands. Some went down, but about twenty started across the open.

"After them, and get as many as you can," I shouted. "We've got to make this a lesson!"

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Under the cover of the trees we ran, shooting as we went, until they crossed the stream and were lost in the blackness beyond.

Something stirred behind us, and Trevor jumped into the underbrush. There was a brief struggle, and then he swore.

"Gimme a light," he demanded. "I've got something queer."

I struck a taper match and held it above my head. Dillingame had two slender wrists grasped in one of his big hands, and as the flame flared higher, my eyes followed his other hand to where it was twisted in a woman's hair—the woman of the nipa swamp, snake and red tree frog, the woman who had snatched the sable butterfly from Lee San's bleeding shoulder!

Gomez switched on an electric torch and we all stood staring at her. Man, but she was beautiful! Short grass skirt, leather sandals bound halfway up her legs, the upper part of her body bare save for wreaths of jasmine. Her skin was as white as the flowers of the great moth-orchid, her lips crimson as red blood, her eyes blazing violet, swimming with flecks of gold, and her hair beneath Trevor's hand was black and soft as silken thread.

Losh, but she was beautiful as she stared back at us, her little hands twisting helplessly in the Englishman's big one, her body tensed.

Then, before we could find words, her form relaxed, her eyes flew to Trevor's face and she laughed up at him. Not a wild, hysterical laugh, just a soft, amused little one with an undercurrent of contempt in it—the sound a woman makes over a child who has done some silly thing.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw Gomez cross himself and shift forward his automatic.

"Laugh, you vixen," said Dillingame, but his eyes were not unkind. "She jabbed a knife into me and fought like a wild cat," he flung us in an aside, then turning back to her, "Do you know I ought to kill you, shoot you down in your tracks?"

Of course the woman did not understand, and again she laughed up at him, her lips curving back over her white teeth, her violet golden eyes half shut.

"Santa Maria!" gasped Gomez. "Let me shoot her and then we'll burn her body in the fire. Don't you see she is a *hantus*, a witch? She will enchant us all and the leeches will suck our bodies dry. I am afraid—me!"

"Don't be a fool," I advised gruffly, stepping in front of him, for he was fingering his pistol nervously. "Bring your captive lassie to the tents, Trevor. I'm thinking we won't be troubled with those poisoned darts while she is with us. Gomez, go over and tell the porters to keep down on the ground. If there is one of those blowgun men simply wounded, haul him in and we'll see what we can get out of him."

It had begun to drizzle. I threw wood on the fire and piled the packs in a barricade, the tents for ends. Meanwhile Trevor tied the woman's wrists together, holding the end of the rope in his own hands; nor did she resist. Gomez came back driving a small figure before him and, as it came into the firelight, I nearly yelled.

It wasn't a man, it was a beast, a human ape! There was a *sarong* around its middle but the rest of the body was naked and evenly covered with a generous growth of reddish hair, arms ending in tiny hands hung below its knees, and its head jerked from side to side with the lightning quickness of an animal while it whimpered over a wounded thigh where a bullet had creased the black skin.

The only human thing about it was its hair, which was elaborately dressed high on the head and through which were stuck several of the tiny poisoned arrows.

Suddenly it caught sight of the woman, and going down in a cringing heap, lay motionless, its face against the ground.

"Five dead," reported Gomez laconically, and took his seat as far as possible from the Englishman and his captive.

I addressed the girl in the Ida'an tongue.

"Why did you lead your slaves to kill us? Have we done you harm?"

"You come for gold as do all strangers—our gold is pledged. About that I should not care, but you take the souls of the dead, the butterflies. Not even do you respect the souls of the sacred priests that sail on sable wings!"

"Who are you that talk of souls!"

"Kratas, priestess of the Land of Blood, who knows not death, who lives forever."

"Yon lassie is wrong in her head," I said to Dillingame in English. "Let's try and find out something from the beast-man," and I heaved him to his feet.

What came next happened quicker than word can tell it. Raising her hands to her lips the woman severed the cords that bound her wrists with one snap of her white teeth. Trevor caught her around the shoulders and, whirling, she bit deep into his hand.

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"You'll pay for that, my girl," he snarled, gathered her into his arms, bent, and kissed her lips. One second she relaxed, clung to him, then twisted free, caught a tiny poisoned arrow from the savage's hair, drew the point in a long scratch across his back, and leaped over the packs. Trevor sprang after her just in time to slap Gomez's automatic from his hand as he fired.

A taunting laugh floated back out of the darkness.

The beast-man died from the poisoned scratch, toward morning, with many twistings and writhings. With the first light our Ida'ans disappeared up the trail and we could not catch them. They left three dead behind, victims of the poisoned arrows, and we found six beast-men in the jungle and five in the open that had stopped our bullets.

It took some time to dig a pit large enough for all those bodies, and, after we had stamped down the dirt, we sat on the packs and looked dismally at one another.

Gomez broke the silence. "Money I like it much, but if I am dead or crazy it does me no good. Let us go back as quickly as we can with what provisions our shoulders will carry."

"That's all very well for you," spoke up Dillingame, "you have a stake tucked away. Freeman and I have our all in this venture. I move we linger on and try to pick up something else. What do you say, Andy?"

"There is food for a long time," I answered judicially, "and we are more liable to be attacked on the back trail running away than if we stay boldly here. I'll not say it were best to go on, nor will I say it were best to stay, but—"

I broke off, and dived for my net. A gray butterfly of the new genus was floating just outside the barrier of packs. I caught it in midair. Then I chased another, and another till, with eleven perfect and four damaged specimens, I finally returned to the tents. Dillingame had the real luck, though. He brought in forty of them, all taken over a crimson orchid, and netted an immense Hestia besides.

As we removed our catch from the cyanide bottles and folded them, wings back to back, into envelopes before packing them away in our waterproof collecting boxes, we easily calculated with what we already had we'd break better than square on the expedition.

Gomez was not there when we returned, but he drifted in with his gold washing pan shortly afterward, and an I-have-eaten-the-canary expression on his face.

"You found it!" I guessed at once, and could see his under lip stiffen for a lie.

"I have found traces," he answered; "it may be here, though probably in very small quantities. Anyway, I'm brave enough to stay on a little while even if you gentlemen are not."

Dillingame's face went purple, but I spoke before he could explode.

"Sure, we'll stay on. After Trevor and I have done a little more collecting we'll all turn in and pan the stream, and if there is gold we'll find it. Meanwhile let's match to see who cooks today!" And there the matter rested.

I'M A cautious man—being Scotch—and haven't been every place in the world, so I'll not say there are not collecting grounds equal to where we were, but under oath I'll swear these were the best I had ever seen.

We found no further new species of the larger butterflies, but the microlepidoptera would have kept a systematist busy classifying them for an entire year. The unnamed orchids were legion, and we took skins of two new pheasants, not to mention the Argus, Bullwer and Fireback ones; a rare yellow shrike, gorgeous red and yellow sunbirds, and a cream-white lemur. All day we were off in the jungle so interested in our own work that we paid little attention to Gomez.

Gradually it dawned on us that the Portugese had developed a virulent grouch, wasn't even civil, and one morning when it was raining torrents, so it was impossible to leave the tents, matters came to a head. It all began by Dillingame detailing our harvest of butterflies, orchids and birds for his benefit, a cataloguing which he terminated by the statement that the next day we would join in the gold search.

Gomez promptly answered with a snarl that he'd attend to his business and it would be healthier for us to keep to ours, that we needn't be afraid he wouldn't make a fair division-even though we had lured him on the trip under false pretenses and made him do all the work. And then, without the slightest warning, he jerked out his gun and barely missed the Englishman. Furious, Dillingame made a jump for him. The Portuguese fired again just as I hauled the tent pole down so the two of them were wrapped in its folds. From the outside I gathered the little man into

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a neat bundle of canvas. Trevor crawled from beneath, and we undid Gomez with a gun pressed to his stomach, and then tied him hand and foot.

There was no doubt he had intended to kill both of us, and he expected no gentler fate at our hands, especially after we had searched him and found fully a pound of dust in a belt strapped around his waist. There was nothing of the hero about him, and he began to whine for his life, offering the bribe of showing us the exact place he had found the gold.

I'll not deny that the Anglo-Saxon is the greatest of all races, but being one has its disadvantages at times—we talk when we should act. To save a cartridge Gomez should have had a knife stuck into him, and a savage would have applied that practical solution to his problem. White men are civilized beyond logic, however.

I sat down by the trussed-up, treacherous little rat and explained to him carefully that if he appeared at Brunei without us there would be no possibility of any explanation he might offer getting over, that he would have a mighty short time to enjoy his gold before some of our friends got him. Then we turned him loose.

Trevor kicked him once, and, according to the custom of fool Anglo-Saxons, after that we acted as though nothing had happened.

Our combined search for gold was without result. Gomez had taken his from a single pot-hole in the bottom of the creek —he showed us where. There were traces everywhere, but no place worth a second panning. The formation was unusual, the water flowing over a thin bed of sand beneath which was solid rock. The creek itself sprang from a swamp, half a mile up the mountainside, and for the two miles we followed it down, ran between high banks on which grew short grass and mighty teak or cocoanut trees exactly like the place where we were camped.

Since the immediate neighborhood had been thoroughly raked over both for specimens and gold, it seemed best to move on, and the banks of the stream offered open going without the trail danger of being ambushed or speared in a pig trap. We cached nearly everything, including the orchids and bird and animal skins, swinging them high in air by ropes over the limbs of the immense trees, and with our butterflies (which took up little bulk), ammunition, some food, and a small pack of trading stuff, the three of us started down stream.

For three miles the character of the country did not change, and then there was an abrupt dip. The stream broke into rapids and went brawling downwards, both grass and trees disappeared from the banks, their places being taken by immense boulders, stretches of bare rock and sandy beach. Half a mile from the stream, on either side, rose the barrier of the jungle, and it was dry, broiling hot.

We progressed along the sandy beach until well into the afternoon, stopping every now and then to pan the edges of the stream, but getting no color. Before us rose a cloud of vapor that I took at first for smoke and then decided must be mist above some great waterfall.

We camped early. Wood had to be brought from the jungle half a mile away, but the ground was smooth, so we dragged an entire dead tree to the beach without much difficulty. A cool—too cool—wind sprang up at dusk, driving away the mosquitoes, and by the time it was dark we were grateful indeed for the fire.

I suppose it may seem queer to anyone who has not felt the spell of the unexplored wilderness that we should go on and on facing known as well as unknown dangers. Really it was the perfectly logical and natural thing, considering the men we were. Gomez was spurred on by his insatiable lust for gold. Dillingame and I told one another that we must have that sable butterfly; but the real reason lay in that lure, irresistible to men of our race, that Kipling so well expresses:

> Something yet beyond the ranges,
> Diddle, diddle, diddle come,
> Something calling, something calling,
> Diddle, diddle, diddle dum.

I don't remember the exact words.

AFTER supper we sat around sleepily watching the bats swoop through the flames and listening to the roar of life from the jungle. A great beetle blundered into the fire and toppled over to the ground at our feet. Dillingame and I bent over it. There was a gasp from Gomez that made us look up.

Sitting on a boulder within the circle of the firelight was Kratas, the priestess; two sable butterfly wings on her forehead; neck and bosom wreathed with jasmine, and an oblong, palmleaf-wrapped bundle between her small hands.

"Welcome, priestess of the *orang utan* (wild men)," I said, shifting my automatic

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The creature looked like the devil disguised in the form of a dragon.

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well forward under my fingers. "Many times welcome, wearer of the sable wings."

She did not answer me, just sat motionless, her fearless eyes, filled with curiosity, resting on each of us in turn. Gomez shifted uneasily in his seat, Trevor picked up the floundering beetle and held it between his long nervous fingers, I slipped the strap from the trading pack.

"Do you, then, love to play 'neath the shadow of death that ye linger here, or have ye eaten of the blue root of madness?" she asked.

""Death dare not approach us," I boasted.

She seemed to accept my words as a mere statement of fact.

"And yet there was blood beneath my teeth when they sank into his white flesh," she mused, looking at Dillingame. "My lips were salty with it till his lips ravaged the taste from mine." Then, abruptly changing her tone, "I bring ye the gift that all white men crave," and she tossed the compact palmleaf bundle at my feet. "Let it be *salaamat jelan* (good-by). I bid ye go whence ye came before three suns."

"Tell her we haven't the slightest intention of leaving until we take some of those black butterflies," broke in Trevor obstinately.

"I'll tell her no such thing," was my answer, but the woman had gathered some of the meaning from the tone of his voice.

"Let him remain if he desires it more than life," she said softly, and, gliding to the Englishman, held her lips up to his.

"We, too, offer gifts," I hastened, to attract her attention, tumbling an alarm clock, gross of earrings and bolt of pink calico out of the pack, but she did not even glance at them. Drawing her lips back from his, she laughed up into Trevor's face, and was gone into the night.

"Andy, I don't believe any man but me has ever kissed that woman," he sighed.

"Holy smoke! And who cares if a hundred had?" I demanded.

Gomez tore open the palmleaf bundle and its contents slipped to the ground—twenty hollow porcupine quills filled with gold.

"Fools we were not to keep her once we had her," he cried, gathering up the hollow tubes, avariciously. "There are probably quantities where this came from. A cord around her temples or a little fire. . . . What's that for?" he howled, as Dillingame's boot caught him in the side.

In the morning, we started down stream toward the vapor that hung in the sky. I listened for the crash of falling water as we approached, but there was no greater sound than the murmur of the stream. After a mile the stream itself switched abruptly to the left while the vapor cloud rose dead ahead and close to the edge of the jungle. We were walking on solid rock that dipped in a series of remarkably symmetrical, spaced steps, so it was like going down a very shallow pyramid.

Nearer, the vapor took definite form, one thick jet going straight up into the air, and touching each side of this central column were two misty, broad, rounded clouds.

"Santa Maria!" gasped Gomez. "It looks like one of your cursed butterflies!"

And so it did, the body clearly defined and the wings spread out and moving in the slight breeze.

A hundred yards further on we halted in amazement. At our feet a narrow flight of stone stairs ran down into a valley, or rather an enormous amphitheatre, since it was plainly the work of man. Half a mile broad and three-quarters of a mile long, it was sunk fifty feet deep in the solid rock. Immediately below us three springs boiled up about a central tank, springs of hot water, judging from the steam that rose and traced the butterfly in the sky. The floor was bare rock, save on the opposite side where a belt of jungle had gained a foot-hold and flourished luxuriantly.

At the end of the amphitheatre, to the left, a hundred-yard flight of easy steps led us to the plain—and, gazing in that direction, I yanked both my companions flat on the ground.

Coming down the steps was a strange procession. In the lead four bearers carried a closed litter, or palanquin, on each side of which marched attendants with long palm fronds in their hands, by means of which they created an artificial breeze for its occupant. Six men brought up the rear, muskets over their shoulders. As they reached the springs immediately beneath us, we saw that all were Chinamen.

The palanquin was placed on the ground, the curtain drawn, and out stepped a mandarin, the largest Chinaman I have ever looked upon. He must have been all of seven feet tall, very broad, and in addition, enormously fat. The attendants pitched a small tent in the stream of the springs and, after the tent flap had been respectfully held back for the big man to enter, the last of them joined his fellows in the shade thrown by the litter.

Plainly the mandarin was quite some dog

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and his preparation for a hot bath a real ceremony.

Before us, the giant amphitheatre for a stage, action developed like the plot on a moving picture screen. From the edge of the jungle directly across trotted out a large bull rhinoceros, its guardian angel, the Buphagus bird, flying ahead. The coolies were squatted behind the palanquin, their master still in his tent, and the great beast approached entirely unobserved.

Twenty yards from the springs, the rhinoceros bird flew back to its charge with a harsh cry of warning. The animal stood stock still for a moment, sampling the breeze; then with a squeal of rage it charged ponderously down on the empty palanquin, behind which the attendant Chinamen were sheltered from the sun.

Howling with fear, the servants fled toward the broad stairway. The horn of the furious pachiderm became entangled in the curtains of the palanquin, and it paused long enough to smash the frame to bits. The tent flap swayed back, revealing a half-naked mandarin who, taking in the situation at a glance, plunged into the tank between the hot springs. Whirling on the tent, the rhinoceros trampled it flat, then stretched its ugly head into the stream through which the figure of the immense Chinaman loomed dimly.

I rose to my feet, our heaviest rifle at my shoulder, drew a bead on the spine at the base of the short neck, and pulled trigger.

A rhinoceros hide may stop an ordinary bullet, but it's no proof against a steel capped projectile, cut to mushroom, and fired from above. The great bulk heaved one step forward and then flattened out, stone dead, while the guardian bird circled around, still uttering its warning cry.

"Come on," I commanded, rising to my feet, "let's go down and get thanked. The Lord knows what we are in for next, the only way to find out is to keep going ahead."

We left our packs where they had dropped and climbed down the narrow stairway. The Chinaman had emerged from his forced plunge, his skin so pink as to indicate the water was slightly too hot for comfort, and, gathering up some garments from the wreck of the tent, stood ready to receive us, the dead rhinoceros at his feet.

As I approached, the size of the yellow man became more apparent. He must have weighed all of four hundred pounds, and there was something queer about his face, something horrible! To begin with a black butterfly was tattooed on his forehead, his eyebrows had been shaved, and each eye was circled by a broad ring of crimson. But it was his mouth that made the shivers run up and down my spine, for the lips had been cut away square in front, showing all his yellow, flat teeth, with two fangs, like those of a dog, at the ends. And he had no ears.

I spoke the Ida'an words of conventional greeting, and the monster mumbled their answer. Gomez and Dillingame came up behind us, and I heard the latter exclaim "My word!" Then there was a silence.

Finally the Chinaman spoke, the words hissing through his teeth.

"Whence came ye?"

I waved my hand in the general direction of the west. To tell the truth, his apparently complete absence of gratitude for preventing a rhinoceros from sharing his bath began to irritate me.

"Why came ye here?" he demanded arrogantly.

Thoroughly angry now, I jammed my hands in my pockets, determined not to answer, even by gestures. My left hand touched something round, and, feeling to see what it was, thin glass shaped beneath my fingers. A sudden inspiration came to me. I drew out the little locket I had taken from Gomez, which held the round section of black butterfly wing, and, shaking off the broken glass, stepped to the dead rhinoceros and held the talisman up to the haughty mandarin standing on the other side.

Have you, perhaps, seen one of those balloons the bairns buy at fairs slowly collapse, the skin loosening, wrinkling, finally sinking into crinkled folds? That is what happened to the man before me. His eyes started from his head, his head sank between his shoulders, and his whole, enormous body seemed to shrink, sinking in on itself. With a groan he spread his hands before his face, salaamed thrice, forehead to the ground, and his voice was a toneless whisper when he said:

"Make known thy bidding! I see the sign and am thy slave."

CHAPTER III

IN THE TEMPLE

EVEN in after days I never fully understood why Lo Chan (thus did the mandarin name himself) caved in so utterly at

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the sight of the talisman. I found out before I had been long in the Land of Blood that this same small, round locket accompanied the Murut (never a Chinaman, always a Murut) who brought the tribute of gold dust to the Tong head waiting for it on the coast.

Why, in my hands, it should have such potency, remains an unsolved problem. I evolved the theory, for want of a better, that the breaking of the glass above the section of black butterfly wing had some special meaning in the complicated and mysterious ritual of the Tong.

Such speculations have small significance, however. What really mattered was the fact that the mandarin recognized in the talisman a power that he feared and dared not disobey, and was, in his own words, immediately my slave.

Lo Chan stepped over the dead rhinoceros and blew a blast on a silver whistle, carved in the semblance of a dragon. The coolies reappeared at the top of the broad stairway and came timidly down to the springs. Evidently assuming that we wished to be taken to his headquarters, the Chinaman ordered his servants to pick up our packs, and himself led the way out of the amphitheatre.

It was apparent that walking was not the mandarin's favorite form of exercise, and I was rather sorry for that enormous bulk of a man toiling ahead in the burning sun, sorry as it was possible to be for anyone so utterly repulsive physically.

From the sunken amphitheatre we continued in the direction of the stream, which we struck after two miles of heavy going through sand, and then followed over a road, always sloping downward, paved with large blocks of stone, their surfaces worn as though by innumerable feet. Vegetation reappeared, gradually thickening into jungle, and in the distance rose what I took for a hill of bare rock.

The stream lost itself in wet, swampy ground on either side of the stone causeway; tree tops met overhead, shutting out the light, and we came at last to a long house of bamboo, set upon piles. Ladders admitted us beneath the thatched roof, and we were in Lo Chan's home.

Certainly that fat mandarin did not believe in discomfort. The house was no different in construction from the usual Ida'an dwelling, a single sixty-foot room with no partitions or front; but its contents were of a richness none of us had ever dreamed of. Silk rugs of brilliant colors strewed the floors; on the walls were hung embroideries heavy with gold; there were inlaid tabourets, vases as high as a man's head, and low couches heaped with pillows.

A corner, hidden behind silver-embossed screens, held the complete paraphernalia of the opium smoker, and a great gold-and-red curtain, whence came feminine rustlings and whisperings, barred off one end of the long room.

Behind this curtain Lo Chan retired with a last profound salaam, and we were left alone.

Dillingame began to laugh. They are a feckless people, the English; I could see no joke.

"For a cautious Scotchman as you claim to be," he announced, "it seems to me you are taking big chances. That piece of butterfly's wing is a frail excuse for bossing a mandarin."

"You're a fool," stuttered Gomez, "a reckless fool to run us into this. Do you suppose for one minute that you can trust that mandarin? Do you know what the mutilation of his face means? He has been guilty of the vilest crime a Chinaman can commit; he's a parricide! Had he been a coolie he would have been burned to death. His rank saved him, but not from mutilation that all his race might know and scorn him, and he has plainly been banished to this corner of the world. Give me back that piece of butterfly wing before you get us into more trouble. It's mine, anyway!"

I think I have already said that I am a Scotchman, and therefore firm—not obstinate, firm; and once I have set myself to follow a certain course I am not to be turned aside. Besides, the Portuguese showed an awful cheek in trying to run matters, considering his general reputation and what we especially knew of him. I promptly told him to mind his own business, that I had brought him to the very source of the gold, and that I'd keep the talisman.

Dillingame backed me up, of course, and together we quickly silenced the vicious little runt.

With sundown came a meal the like of which we had not tasted for many a month. Lo Chan did not reappear, and we slept that night through in absolute comfort.

In the morning there was a council. Gomez urged a direct demand for gold and a quick departure. Trevor had no suggestion to make except that we do something at once. I proposed to let matters develop along their own lines, trying to pump our

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host without arousing his suspicions that we really hadn't the slightest idea what we were doing.

We called the mandarin in and I asked him for a report on his stewardship. Of course I had no idea what I meant, but it seemed a safe question. He answered that the coolies had been unable to wash out the usual quantity of gold, the workings were not half as rich as formerly, but that the temple tribute came in regularly every full of the moon.

Not much information in all this. The only thing I could think of was to take a look at the temple, and I ordered him on.

The wet jungle was cut by numerous stone causeways, between which I soon decided, had once been rice fields, now grown up save for occasional patches of paddy, to great trees. Everywhere were indications of a once flourishing city, stone roads, ruined houses also often of stone, and the worn surface of the rock on which we walked.

Finally the jungle opened, revealing what I had taken for an elevation of naked rock, and we halted in amazement. Built of blocks of stone, the size of which made it seem impossible they could have been moved by human hands, rose an immense, pagoda-like structure of three great stories, the topmost crowned with a single enormous block of glittering stone.

Strange beasts were carved on the overhanging balconies, and plaques of metal hung down in clusters, tinkling musically in the slight breeze. A small pond, surrounded by a rampart of stone, its edges overgrown with white lilies, spread out in front of the temple, and the water in its centre, bubbling up ceaselessly, was red as blood.

In every cranny where the tropic vegetation could find a foothold it flourished, but not even the great rending power of its growth had been able to move the enormous blocks, and bring to the ground the astonishing edifice. And there was a queer air of emptiness about it, as though it had just been deserted by a multitude that might swarm back at any moment.

INTO dim coolness we entered through a lofty square portico. There was absolute silence save for two sounds—the hushed clink of the swaying metallic plaques and a muffled murmur as though of running water. The ground floor was a great bare room of solid rock, with an aperture in the ceiling opening up all the way to the sky through the successive floors, and down which came a thin shaft of light. A strong ladder led up to this aperture, and towards it I pushed the mandarin. But he drew back with an exclamation of horror.

"It is not permitted!"

"Mount," I ordered, and he preceded me, obedient, though trembling.

The next story was full of vague rustlings from a floor knee deep in green foliage. Something moved at my feet, and I bent down. Seven inches long and black as jet, a thick caterpillar was eating ravenously into a camphor tree leaf.

Dillingame picked it up between his long fingers and together we examined it. Never have I looked on anything more repulsive than that twisting, worm-like creature. Unlike any caterpillar I had ever seen, it was furnished with heavy, piercing jaws—it was a flesh-eating, predacious thing that could have bitten through a finger.

"Pretty, isn't it?" commented Trevor, snapping it back disgustedly among the leaves.

At the end of the room were piled great wicker baskets whence came the sound as though of running water. We knew what those baskets held, of course; the red tree frogs from the coast. To make sure I threw back a lid. A crimson cloud floated about me as the little piping things sailed out, to fall among the leaves on the floor.

Then happened something horrible. Like lightning black caterpillars fastened their ugly jaws to the tree frogs, paralyzing them so that in a moment all were silent and still. It was plain that these joyous, crimson travelers were tid-bits indeed to the black larvae—undoubtedly brought from the coast for this purpose.

Rather shaken, I shepherded Lo Chan before us down the ladder and we hurried out into the warm sunshine. The blood-red pond with its border of snow-white water lilies heaved and bubbled as some great body swam across it barely under the water, so as to leave a swirling wake. Half running, half hopping along the causeways, bent figures sped before us. One of them swarmed up the trunk of a tree with all the agility of a monkey. Nearer, we saw that they were those same beast-men whom Kratas, the priestess, had brought down on us in the jungle.

"Let's go back to the house," urged Dillingame, "and kind of orient ourselves before we see any more horrors."

I motioned to Lo Chan to lead the way, and we retraced our steps. The Chinaman kept glancing back at me, and I knew instinctively that something was wrong—I

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had blundered in some detail, and he suspected I was not really what he had first taken me for.

Gomez broke out again as soon as we were alone.

"What's the use of all this waiting?" he demanded. "Why not ask the mandarin for all the gold he has, and get out of here? I'm afraid—me! There is magic all around us, black magic. . . . Those frightful worms!"

"Shut up and let me think," I answered crossly. "We have got to make up our minds to some definite plan of action—though I'm hanged if I know what!"

"The first thing to do is to go back and get some of those caterpillars," broke in Trevor. "I'll wager they are the larvae from which the black butterflies develop, even if predacious butterfly larvae had never been heard of before. Also I'll wager we run into Kratas before long."

The Portuguese shivered.

"I'm not going back to that place of evil," he announced decidedly, "especially if there is any chance of meeting the witch."

"Besides, we must look into that red pond and find out what that big thing swimming under water was," continued Dillingame, paying no attention to the interruption.

"Let's have a pow-wow with the Chinee first of all," I suggested, and clapped my hands to summon him.

Lo Chan emerged from behind the red-and-gold curtain, and salaamed. It may have been imagination, but I seemed to detect that there was not quite the same degree of reverence he had shown in the past.

"I desire to look into the matter of the gold," I announced, making my statement as indefinite as possible.

"This afternoon we will go to the diggings," and he salaamed anew.

"What's he saying?" demanded Dillingame, and I translated.

"We're going back to the temple this afternoon," the Englishman insisted obstinately. "Put off the other trip till tomorrow."

"Why not let me go with him," eagerly suggested Gomez, "while you two attend to other matters?"

For a moment I hesitated. The Portuguese was not to be trusted, and I did not know what he might hatch out against us. On the other hand, since he could speak no Ida'an or Chinese, how could he plot with the mandarin? Ashamed of my fears, I gave my consent and advised Lo Chan that only Gomez would accompany him. Again he bowed and withdrew.

Then, since the sun was at its height and it was insufferably hot, we stretched ourselves on the cold *kajang* matting for a noontime siesta.

WE WERE not destined to visit the temple that afternoon, the next day, or the day after; nor did Gomez get to the gold diggings. After an hour's uneasy doze we woke fairly gasping for breath. The heat lay over the world like a heavy blanket, there was not a breath of air, and it was rapidly growing darker. Came a moaning in the tree tops, gradually rising to a roar. Coolies clamped heavy shutters over the open front of the house and then scurried for shelter.

The roar increased to thunder, a breath of cool wind slipped in through the loosely woven walls, and then came the rain, a solid sheet of water crashing onto the ground as though hurled from above.

The coolies brought lights and, unable to make ourselves heard in the awful tumult, we settled down to wait for the end of the storm. Gomez began cooking opium pills and was soon lost in oblivion. Trevor found some rice-paper and I tried to teach him more of the Ida'an dialect (he had picked up quite a bit by himself) spelling out the words phonetically.

It rained without ceasing the next day and the next; then at sundown the storm came to an end as quickly as it had begun. The shutters were removed from the front of the house, Gomez emerged from his opium trance, and Trevor and I could hear each other speak. All ground between the stone causeways was under water and every curved leaf was a miniature fountain of silvery spray.

For half an hour we stretched our legs outside and then returned for the rest that had been impossible during the roar of the rain. The sun sank, the birds became silent, and my companions' deep breathing soon told me that they had found sleep.

From the jungle, clear and pure as a silver thread, floated a voice:

"Gone is the wind, the rain is past,
The moonlit night is here at last.
I wait, all longing, wait for thee,
Come fast, my love, come fast to me.

"My skin is pale as the jasmine flower,
(Oh, haste you, love, 'tis the sacred hour!)
My breath is sweet as the *areca* bloom,
Where its purple cups in the darkness loom!"

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Trevor snorted in his sleep and I stirred him with my elbow. "Wake up," I whispered. "You are being serenaded. You or that other handsome laddie, the mandarin."

"As the *epidendrum* holds the *anguska* tree,
Musk-scented, my arms shall twine 'round thee;
As the teak is held by the clinging vine,
Thus shall thy lips be held to mine!"

"It's Kratas," exclaimed Dillingame, sitting up, "and she isn't serenading that fat Chinaman, either! What did that last verse mean?"

"Leave this place as quick as you can,
I much prefer the fat Chinaman,
Or I'll have to jab a poison dart
Straight through the middle of your heart."

I translated obligingly—this love affair seemed to me to be verging on the serious.

"You're a liar," he answered promptly, and stepped out boldly into the darkness.

"Come back, you fool," I called after him. "You'll get a knife stuck into you!" But he had disappeared.

Groaning at the stark idiocy of it—Trevor had never shown himself a ladies' man before—I followed down the ladder. Somewhere in the blackness the girl laughed. My foot went off the causeway and I plumped down into the water.

Crawling out again, and cussing beneath my breath, I listened. There was no sound. Disgusted, I climbed back, shed my wet clothes and rolled up in a blanket. Again came the girl's laugh from out of the night. The ladder creaked beneath Trevor's weight and he scratched a match. Around his neck was a jasmine wreath and he held a small palm-leaf package in his hand.

"Did she kiss you?" I asked him disagreeably.

"None of your business, but I couldn't get close enough to her," he growled. "She just chucked the flowers around my neck, gave me this bundle and vanished. I couldn't think of the Ida'an for 'come back,' either."

IN THE tropics, the morning after a storm is always beautiful. The coolness still lingers, and everything is fresh green and has generally grown about a yard. We woke full of energy; even Gomez seemed to feel no ill effects from his opium debauch, and decided to carry out our original program of visiting the temple while the Portuguese accompanied the Chinaman to the gold diggings.

I was about to clap my hands to summon Lo Chan when he lurched from behind the red-and-gold curtain. Evidently opium had also been his solace for the last two days, and the effects had not worn off. At any rate, he omitted the customary salaam and began a rather heated harangue.

According to the laws of the Tong (so he said) certain privileges were due him, and I had given no intimation that I intended to grant them. For example, even if I had been sent to take his place, I should have told him at once of the manner and time of his death—it was his right. Also where was the acknowledgment of the last tribute of gold sent to the coast, and his written sentence from the Tong?

More and more inflamed by his own words and still swayed by the poppy drug, he began to wave his arms.

How did he know we hadn't stolen the black butterfly talisman? That we weren't impostors? What kept him from calling in his coolies and having us strung up by the thumbs?

This sort of talk couldn't go on, of course. The drugged man was lashing himself into a fury. I gave Dillingame a signal (he always did the fighting for both of us), and the Chinaman went down to an uppercut nicely combined with a trip.

"Dog of a parricide," I thundered, "you shall die a death unnamed, nor shall I tell you when! Who are you, scum of the earth, to question the black butterfly's wing?" and I hauled it out of my pocket.

Lo Chan got slowly to his feet and salaamed, all the fight knocked out of him.

"'Twas a madness," he mumbled. "I do my lord's bidding."

Gomez was scared to death of the big Chinaman after this outburst, but his desire to see the place whence the gold came prevailed over his fears, and away the two then went, surrounded by a guard of coolies.

The very first thing Trevor and I did when we were alone was to open the little package Kratas had given to the Englishman the night before. Inside the palm leaf wrapping was a soft piece of native cloth, which we unrolled, bringing to light two eight-inch-long cocoons, jet black, their fine silk-like threads woven as closely as a piece of line. Dillingame split one open with the sharp blade of his knife and the pupa tumbled out on the floor.

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Most pupae of butterflies make you think of angels or souls in transition. This one looked exactly like the devil disguised in the form of a dragon.

"Let's see that butterfly talisman," he demanded, and I laid it before him while he was trying to dissect out the embryonic wing. The pupa was not sufficiently developed to show wing veination, though, so he carefully replaced it in its silk cocoon and did it up with the other.

"Keep the talisman," I suggested, "and try to ask Kratas about it in the intervals of your unholy love-making."

I overhauled our weapons carefully, as became a cautious man, before starting for the temple, and we set out heavily armed. There was water on either side of the causeways and the stones beneath our feet were steaming wet. A little wind fanned the tree-tops and the whole world seemed to be a waving silver-and-green symphony.

It was not a deserted world, however, as it had been on our previous expedition. The little beast-men were trotting along the stone roads, pressing timorously to the edges while we passed, and all converging in the same direction toward the temple. They lined the rampart around the pond, no longer blood red, in which we had seen the mysterious ripple, and the square in front of the portico was one solid mass of them. There must have been two thousand of the ape-like beings, and from this great multitude came not a sound.

"Go on or hang back?" I interrogated Trevor.

"On, since we started," he answered. "Besides, they haven't even their blow-guns."

The crowd opened silently before us as we strode toward the entrance of the temple. Inside, it was as empty as when we had first visited it, save that a single, thin shaft of sunlight came down through the aperture above.

"Come on," called Dillingame, and I followed him upward. The sides being shuttered in, it was quite dark at first as we stood on the top rounds of the ladder and tried to pierce the gloom. The bar of light broadened and I saw the edge of the sun overhead. Dimly we made out that the foliage had been removed from the floor; then as the light increased, we saw the walls hung everywhere with the long, black cocoons, the resting stage into which the black caterpillars had entered.

The sun came square over the hole at the top of the temple, shining down so brightly into our eyes that we were blinded; and at the same moment came a murmur from outside as though each member of the crowd had drawn a single, simultaneous deep breath.

"Next act. Let's see it," I suggested, and we backed down the ladder, shielding our eyes from the glare.

ALONG a causeway to the left, where were turned all the beast-men's faces, slowly advanced a group of strangely clad figures. Closer, we made out that they were old, old women, wrinkled, bent, tottering, clothed in strips of many-colored cloths that fluttered from their scrawny shoulders. Immediately before the temple they halted and opened out. In their midst appeared one of the beast-men, and bound to his back was the wizened Chinaman we had met leading the Ida'ans whose baskets contained the little red tree frogs.

Suddenly the old women broke into a cackling chorus:

"Pale is the pool with the silver rim,
Pale should be red,
So we send you to him.
When the sun has painted the world to gold
Pale shall be red as it was of old.

"Pale is the pool with the silver rim,
Hungry is he,
So we send you to him.
When the sun has painted the world to gold
Pale shall be red as it was of old."

Straight through the crowd came Kratas till she stood among the shrinking old hags. Catching the beast-man, who bore the Chinaman bound to his back, by the hair, she led him to the edge of the lily-bordered pool.

"Pale is the pool with the silver rim,
Waiting is he.
So go to him.
When the sun has painted the world to gold
Pale shall be red as it was of old,"

chanted the cracked voices.

The captive shrieked and struggled on the beast-man's back. With a mighty heave, Kratas sent them over the ramp into the water, their impetus carrying them beyond the border of white lilies.

The center of the pool bubbled as they sank. Up they came, something tipped with pink, something on a thick black stem pushing them half out of the water and fastening to their bodies. For a moment

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the miserable bound creatures were above the surface; then were drawn slowly under, the water reddening about them.

It all happened so quickly, was done so mechanically, that it was doubly horrible.

"Pretty sweetheart you have," I managed to gasp, "feeding live men to some water monster!"

Dillingame's eyes were popping from his head, but at my words his jaw set.

"Criminals, probably," he stuttered. "She was only seeing justice done—and the pool had to be red."

"Look here," I cried out in horror, "are you defending that—that witch? Have you gone crazy?"

He did not answer; his eyes were on the girl, who was coming through the scattering crowd. I plucked at his sleeve.

"Let's go from here," I begged.

I so hated, and still do hate that woman—indeed, I think she has made me hate all women—that my conscience forces me to do her justice in spite of the wrong she did me. As she stood before us smiling at Dillingame she was beautiful as a dream of Paradise, a goddess of the golden age, Eve, the first woman whence all after drew their charm. I forgot that she was a savage, forgot her beast-men had shot the harmless Ida'an porters, how she had wantonly slain one of them with the poisoned arrow; even forgot the tragedy of the two bound wretches cast to a horrible death in the water-lily-bordered pool. All I could see was that she was beautiful, desirable beyond the whole world.

Paying no attention to me, she halted not a hand's breadth from Trevor, and spoke:

"I am Kratas, priestess of the Land of Blood, who knows not death, who lives forever. The lives of all men—your life—are between my hands.

"I am Kratas, the priestess, guardian of the souls of the dead. Even the sable butterflies are beneath my law.

"I am Kratas, who guards the yellow dust all strangers desire.

"I am Kratas, all-powerful, and I come at set of sun to take you to my house as my slave and mate."

"I don't get that last part," complained Dillingame, turning to me.

"Merely a proposal that will not take 'no' for an answer," I explained. "Shall I tell the lassie you'll think it over?"

"She's very beautiful," he sighed, letting his eyes stray to her.

"The Great Lord from Afar has already a wife whom he loves," I explained hastily in Ida'an, "and *orang putehs* have but one mate."

Her arms were around his shoulders now, and she gave me one venomous backward glance.

"Her blood shall fatten hungry leeches," she hissed, "and he will forget . . ." Her lips found his.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRICE OF MY FREEDOM

DILLINGAME and I quarreled bitterly when we got back to Lo Chan's house. The man was mad, bewitched, and in his stark obstinacy defended himself. Hadn't he a perfect right to kiss a pretty girl if he wanted to? Hadn't she spared us when she might have wiped us out any minute? Wasn't it through her that we hoped to get the black butterfly—and gold?

There was no arguing with such a maniac, and I told him so.

Gomez came back alone, around four o'clock, and in a most disconsolate state of mind. It seems that the gold diggings were in the bottom of a dry creek and the rain had brought down an entire bluff on top of them. The little man was in despair, whined and bemoaned his fate that he had ever come with us, and declared himself ruined.

To tell the truth, we paid little attention to him. Dillingame was stretched out on one of the *kajang* mats looking exasperatingly comfortable and complacent. I was sulkily packing up our belongings at the other end of the house—and it was to me that Gomez gravitated.

The trouble with villains is that they are apt to consider the rest of the world as bad as they are, especially when it is a question of gold. Gomez proceeded to tell me that as soon as he had found out Lo Chan understood Portuguese he had pretended to conspire with him, to discover what he could. He suggested to the Chinaman that Dillingame and I be murdered, and, the piece of black butterfly wing in their possession, they grab all the gold in sight and flee to Dutch Borneo.

Lo Chan had been delighted with the murdering idea when he learned that the talisman was Gomez's property—"had to tell him that, you know"—explained the little man ingenuously—and confided to him that, without it, he would be unable to collect the tribute from the temple.

As to fleeing to Dutch Borneo, however,

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he did not want to because of the difficulty of transporting his three wives.

"My plan now is," the little villain continued, "to pretend to be hand-in-glove with Lo Chan, and through the black butterfly locket—which seems to be the key to the situation—hold him in check. I will let him have the talisman to collect the tribute, then we'll kill him and return to Brunei."

Fine arrangement, wasn't it? All Gomez wanted was to get the little round locket in his hands and then it would be good-by to us. I lost no time in passing all this up to Dillingame, and he lost no time in kicking the Portuguese down the ladder. It was not a diplomatic thing to do, but I couldn't altogether blame him.

We paid for it later, as you will see.

Gomez did not return, and Trevor and I picked up our quarrel where we had left off. I argued for an immediate return to Brunei; what we had already collected would show a good profit on the expedition. Further intercourse with the Portuguese was all but impossible. Dillingame obstinately stood out for waiting till we had secured a specimen of the black butterfly—in other words, until the pupae had developed in the cocoons and emerged; and added that he might trade for some more gold from Kratas—that she seemed to like him.

Seemed to like him! I should say she did! That was my main anxiety, combined with the fact that *he* "seemed to like" *her*.

We argued, if facts being presented by him can be called arguing, till nearly dark, and then we ceased speaking to each other.

Behind the gold-and-red curtain at the end of the house a woman screamed, and the sound was cut off short as though someone had grabbed her by the windpipe. Instinctively we jumped for our weapons. Without the slightest warning the curtain went down, unmasking a huddled crowd of coolies armed with muskets. I yanked Dillingame to the floor just as the house was filled with the roar and smoke of a volley.

"Got me through the shoulder," he gasped, and rolling over, turned loose with his automatic. I pumped my rifle into the thick of the smoke, and then they were upon us.

The first Chinese face that loomed up before me changed to a blur of blood beneath the butt of my gun. With my foot I slid a couch in front of us and then hauled the Englishman to his feet.

In a yellow avalanche the coolies piled over our frail barricade. Dillingame swinging a heavy tabouret, cleared the floor in front of him. I literally blew men from the mouth of my pistol. The smoke rose. I tried to slip in new shells, but there was no time. Over the motionless or squirming bodies of their companions they were upon us again. The Englishman went down, dragging a half a dozen of his assailants with him. Forced against the wall, my arms were twisted upward, a cord slipped around my wrists, binding me helpless, and my knees were pinioned.

The fight had been voiceless, just a silent striving punctuated by the firearms, till this moment, when there was a scream of deadly fear from a coolie. In the open front of the house stood Kratas, her face a mask of rage. From beneath the jasmine wreaths that clothed the upper part of her body she snatched a long knife, and, light as a butterfly, sprang over the couch to where Dillingame lay.

THREE times the knife fell, dripping red after each stroke, and she rolled three dead Chinamen from the body of the unconscious Englishman. Then, with one sweep of her round arms she swung him to her shoulders, spat out some words I did not understand to the cowering coolies, and heedless of my frantic yell for help, went swiftly down the ladder with her limp burden.

The house was a shambles. There were no less than a dozen dead and wounded men lying about, not counting the three Kratas had knifed. Floor, walls, couches and overturned screens were splotched with blood, and the air was heavy with gunpowder and the smell of death.

Gently enough, though I cursed them, I was bound to a bamboo couch, a cushion even being slipped under my head to ease it. The gold-and-red curtain at the end of the room was replaced, dead and wounded were carried away, and I was left in the darkening twilight.

Not for long, however. I heard Gomez speaking in Portuguese at the bottom of the ladder.

"I hope they are both dead, damn 'em. You may take the talisman from Freeman and keep it, for all I care. Just give me a load of gold and I'll find my way down into Dutch Borneo somehow."

"True friend," purred Lo Chan, "it shall be as you desire," and they both came up the ladder.

"You turn me loose, Gomez," I roared, "or I'll beat you to death later."

"I'm going to kill you slowly as soon as

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I have taken away that talisman," he snarled, "you all-virtuous, heavy-handed fool!" and he began to investigate my pockets.

I shut my jaws tight and let them search me. Finally they stripped off most of my clothes and literally tore them to pieces.

"Where's that butterfly thing?" demanded the Portuguese furiously.

"I gave it to Dillingame," I answered in Portuguese so both would understand.

"Dillingame is dead, thanks to me," said Gomez, also in Portuguese. "We'll take a look at his body, Lo Chan."

"He's not dead, as you will soon find out," I interrupted. "Kratas carried him off and the talisman is with him."

"Santa Maria! That witch again!" and the little man crossed himself.

His perturbation was nothing to the terror that convulsed the mandarin's frightfully mutilated face, making it doubly hideous.

"If Kratas gets that talisman, I shall die the unknown death," he wailed to me. "Go, go at once to Dillingame Tuan and beg it of him for me! I will send you from here unharmed, I swear it by the sacred black butterfly, and with all the gold three strong men can carry!"

"What of this swine?" I asked, jerking my head toward Gomez. "Speak Ida'an so he may not understand."

"He shall be burnt over slow fire for your imperial pleasure, or thrown into the silver-rimmed pond. You may see him torn with hot pincers or fed living to the fire ants of the jungle. . . ."

"Enough," I commanded, and translated carefully into English for the Portuguese's benefit.

"Get the sable butterfly's wing and we will kill the Chinaman," he whined back at me. "You wouldn't have a fellow Christian done to death by a yellow heathen, a companion murdered in cold blood!"

"Nothing I'd enjoy more," I answered heartily. "Now, turn me loose."

On my feet, freed of bonds, I restrained myself, though with difficulty, from kicking the little man—it had brought us bad luck before. Food appeared, and with it two iron-bound chests that were humbly laid at my feet. Raising the covers I saw they were filled to the brim with raw gold-dust.

Again, his eyes on the yellow metal, Gomez began to plead that I join him in murdering the mandarin and make away with his fortune. I had just finished translating this for Lo Chan's benefit, just so everything would be nice and friendly, when Kratas stepped in from the darkness.

Without as much as a glance at the other two men she beckoned to me, and I followed her down the ladder. Catching my hand she guided me through the shadows along the causeway. Before the red pond she stopped for a breath, and pointed.

"If he dies—you go there," she hissed.

Past the temple we went and into the black jungle. Ahead of us a voice began to sing, and the words were in English.

"They stuck him full of pins to remind him
of his sins,
And still he swilled down beer and rum together.
So they cut off his fool head and filled him
full of lead—
And a boy's best friend is his mother."

"He prays to his gods," sighed Kratas, dragging me on faster.

I sprang up the ladder into a torch-lit house and hurried to Trevor's side. He was tossing on a broad bamboo couch, a bandage of crushed leaves against his wounded shoulder, and his eyes hot and wild with fever. For a moment he recognized me.

"Hello, Andy, old top! Come to preserve the proprieties, hey? You're a hell of a chaperon.

"Oh, Andy married Margaret,
Oh, Andy married Jane:
He gave his name to Mary
Eloped then with Elaine. . . . "

and he was in the clutch of the fever-devils again.

Thirty long anxious days Kratas and I nursed the Englishman, nursed him with the care and tenderness that a man receives only from his best friend and the woman who loves him.

Each morning Gomez appeared before the house and begged for the butterfly talisman, and each morning I cursed him and bade him be gone.

Kratas, beautiful as a dream of bliss and tender as a mother, never left the sick man's side save twice, and both times I heard the cackling chorus from the direction of the lily-bordered crimson pond.

"Pale is the pool with the silver rim,
Waiting is he,
So go to him.
When the sun has painted the world to gold
Pale shall be red as it was of old."

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The thirty-first day, Dillingame's fever broke, and he knew me, reaching out his hand with a little unsteady smile. Kratas knelt beside him and her lips brushed his as lightly as a passing butterfly. Then he slept.

ONCE Trevor was on the road to recovery, his progress was rapid. In a week he was up and could walk about, though still woefully thin and white. Kratas was unceasing in her devotion and had a retinue of old women—the priestesses clad in the strange garments of strips of colored cloths—waiting on and cooking for him.

Our traps had been brought from Lo Chan's house, and I found time to do quite a bit of collecting, always in the opposite direction from the temple. I couldn't even think of that place without a shudder.

Conditions would have been ideal for a man who loved the jungle and found happiness in solving its secrets had it not been for one thing; Kratas was jealous of every word I spoke to the Englishman. He had made marvelous progress in the Ida'an tongue, and they held long conversations together, part of which Dillingame retailed to me, throwing some light on our situation.

Kratas's story of her own life was extremely simple. She calmly asserted that she was the first woman that had been put on earth; and that she would live forever.

Years ago there were many brothers of Lo Chan in the wilderness, who had built the temple and washed out great stores of gold, which were buried beneath it. Then they had all died, and for a long time there were no Chinaman. Finally Lo Chan and his coolies appeared with the black butterfly talisman to vouch for them, and had started to wash for gold.

Each full of the moon, according to the age-long custom, he was given as many quills of the precious metal as he could hold in both hands; but while in past years the dust had been collected by the beast-men, it was now drawn from the horde beneath the temple. This tribute was then sent to the coast by a Murut, who carried the round piece of butterfly's wing as a passport.

The messenger had not returned from his last trip (Gomez could have told why), but he was expected any moment, since the time of tribute was but two days off.

In regard to the lily-bordered pool, the information was extremely sketchy. It was there dwelt the God of Blood, father of the black butterflies; but what exactly that god was, Kratas did not make clear.

"You see, Andy," Trevor explained to me a dozen times, "what we consider cruel bloodthirstiness in the girl is nothing but custom—a heritage from her ancestors. Since she has always been supreme, the life of a miserable beast-man means nothing to her. Consider for a moment how frightful it must seem to her that we catch and kill butterflies—the souls of the dead!"

He was teaching her to speak English, too; though I hardly saw the necessity of beginning with "darling" for the first noun, and "love" for the verb.

Gomez had not appeared for several days, but that morning he came to the foot of our ladder with an entirely new plan. Lo Chan had promised to send out the gold by him if the Murut did not return— "As I know well he will not," he interjected—if he could secure the black butterfly talisman, which, once recovered, Lo Chan had sworn should never again leave his hands. Instead of going to Brunei we could simply steer for Dutch Borneo, the Portuguese explained, and make away with the gold. He begged and pleaded for the talisman, but I only cursed him while Trevor laughed and tantalized him by holding it up so he might see it.

A pretty pair they made, Gomez and Lo Chan, cold-blooded murderers, both of them, and each continually plotting to destroy the other. Lo Chan's plot, in this instance, was perfectly plain to us. Gomez and his gold would never leave the Land of Blood without the black butterfly wing talisman.

That evening the three of us were sitting in the dusk, and Trevor and I were engaged in a long argument regarding the possible food plants of some new species of butterflies. Twice Kratas had spoken to the Englishman and, absorbed in what we were discussing, he had not answered her.

Without the slightest warning she was on her feet with a snarl of rage.

"Offspring of the wild hog, killer of the souls of the dead," she shrieked at me, "you have dared too much! You would steal my Lord Tre-vor from me. Now you shall die. I have spoken who cannot unsay my words!"

Quick as a snake, she sprang at me, and I caught the bare blade of her knife in my left hand so it cut deep into the fingers. Dillingame threw himself upon her and I wisely retreated down the ladder. For a

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long time he tried to soothe her, but quite in vain. She was absolutely determined on my death—she had spoken who could not unsay her words.

Finally he got her calmed and willing to let me live for the present—and he won this concession with kisses.

My hand bled freely, the blood even soaking through a bandage, and I lay down on my bamboo couch near Dillingame with the pleasant feeling that I should probably be murdered in my sleep.

I woke at dawn to a pang of agony from my wounded hand. There was a great hole in the mosquito net and a soft black thing brushed my face.

Wide awake, as the pain increased, I looked down on a sable butterfly, a foot from wing tip to wing tip, poised above my head, its powerful jaws tearing and biting through the bloody bandage until they reached the live flesh beneath. Light as air it evaded me; then I smothered it beneath folds of the netting, giving it that pinch every butterfly collector knows and it went limp. Marveling at the wonder of those sloe-black wings and fierce jaws, the like of which had never before been known among butterflies, I pinned it, finally, in the cyanide poison box. And it was borne in on me that this winged creature was a cannibal thing that came to human blood.

At intervals all through the next day Gomez came to our house and pleaded desperately for the talisman.

Kratas would not speak to me that day, only glared; and Trevor was plainly disturbed. At last she set out toward the temple and twice we heard the chorus that indicated another wretch had gone to the horrible unknown death in the blood-red pool. It was an anxious twelve hours, and in the evening Kratas simply sent me out of the house while she talked with Trevor.

It rained that night as it rains in the tropics, the drops coming down so that the world held no other sound but their crashing fall. I could not sleep, more than alarmed since I had not been able to get one single word alone with Trevor. Even now Kratas, awake and motionless, crouched in the dark between our beds.

Hours slipped by and suddenly I was conscious of a spot of shadow against the darkness moving silently nearer and nearer to where Dillingame slept. On my feet, I touched the girl's bare shoulder and she sprang forward as though shot from a bow.

The rain drowned all sound of the struggle and I struck a light. Gomez, his hands twisted behind his back, lay on his face, a broad-bladed knife by his side. Dillingame moaned in his sleep and the girl hastily dragged her captive within the house.

"Lo Chan sent him to murder Trevor," I shouted to her above the noise.

She nodded, her face black with fury, and quicker than a wildcat twisted the Portuguese onto his back, burying her

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

THE PURPLE CLOUD

By M. P. Shiel

Bewildered, frantic, he wandered along a nightmare trail, in one last strange, terrible search through a silent planet—to find a single living soul—or die!

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knife in his throat. An imperative hand bade me begone, and as the match flickered out I saw her slip an earthen vase beneath the couch to catch the blood dripping from the dead man's severed jugular vein. When morning came she was still crouched by Dillingame's couch, and all our weapons had disappeared.

Not a word would Kratas let us exchange, her knife at my throat whenever I turned to the Englishman, and the sun was just rising when she led me down the ladder.

"This looks like the end of Andy Freeman," I shouted back to him.

"Kratas, if harm befalls my friend, I too, die," called Dillingame. "Here, take this, Trevor," and he flung at my feet the chamois skin bag that held the black butterfly talisman.

THE same painfully silent crowd of beast-men was before the temple. Inside, the ladder to the second story had been removed and a thin shaft of sunlight came down through the hole in the ceiling, gilding a pile of porcupine quills, through whose transparent sides winked the glint of gold. The old hags with their garments of multi-colored strips of cloth filed in, the leader carrying a covered earthenware vase, which she laid at Kratas's feet. The ray of sunlight from above broadened and the priestess began to sing:

"Fill up thy hands with the golden thing.
Both hands cram-full of the dust we bring
From the secret horde alone we know,
Stored up by thy brothers long ago."

Lo Chan, his horrible features dead white, entered the temple alone and stood before the pile of porcupine quills.

"The moon is full, thy people pay,
Lord of the Pool, on this thy day,
Tribute to those who long did raise
This temple to thy glorious praise."

Through the aperture above came a solid shaft of sunlight, filling it to the edges. A sable butterfly sped down this golden stream of light; another, and then another, until the air was black with their wings. Lo Chan bent down, burying his hands among the heavy quills; and at that very moment Kratas poured the contents of the earthenware vase over his back and shoulders, soaking him from head to foot with red blood. The Chinaman straightened up with a startled cry.

First one and then a swarm of black butterflies darted upon him till his body was all but concealed beneath their quivering wings. He staggered toward the door, beating with shrieks of anguish at the monstrous flying things that fastened to his wrists, his lips, his face. The hole above vomited out a solid column of the horrible insects, and Lo Chan was smothered beneath them.

The mass of quivering wings rose from the ground, hurtled out into the sunlight. Once the man broke free and rushed toward the lily-bordered pool. Then they were on him again, whirled him in their midst above the water.

The surface broke and a pink thing protruded out into the light, a gaping pink mouth a foot broad attached to seven feet of flat, inky body that now lay on the surface—a loathsome, gigantic leech.

The butterflies raised their victim ten feet in air, then slowly sank down with him toward the water. The pink head of the leech went blindly groping among the sable wings; then man and butterflies together disappeared beneath the bubbling water that soon had changed to a livid pink.

For a moment they reappeared, then sank once more, and only the ripples rocking the big white lilies disturbed the calm of the blood-red pool.

"Let us go back," I begged Kratas, a great nausea coming over me.

"*You* go back to the land whence you came," she answered, "living only through my infinite mercy."

Before the bamboo house were waiting five of the beast-men loaded with my baggage. I attempted to mount the ladder, but Kratas jerked me back, and herself ascended.

"It's no use, Andy," said Trevor from above. "You have to go or die. I can not move the girl, and our weapons are gone."

"But aren't you coming?" I whispered, a great horror over me.

"No," he said. "No. It is only by staying that I bought your life. The talisman will protect you on your way out."

Behind him Kratas leaned against his shoulder and snuggled her cheek to his.

"Come back—some time," he said, looking down at me. "I sha'nt be unhappy here, but—come back—some time."

The jasmine-clad girl slipped one beautiful, warm arm around his neck and raised her face to his. Their lips met. . . .

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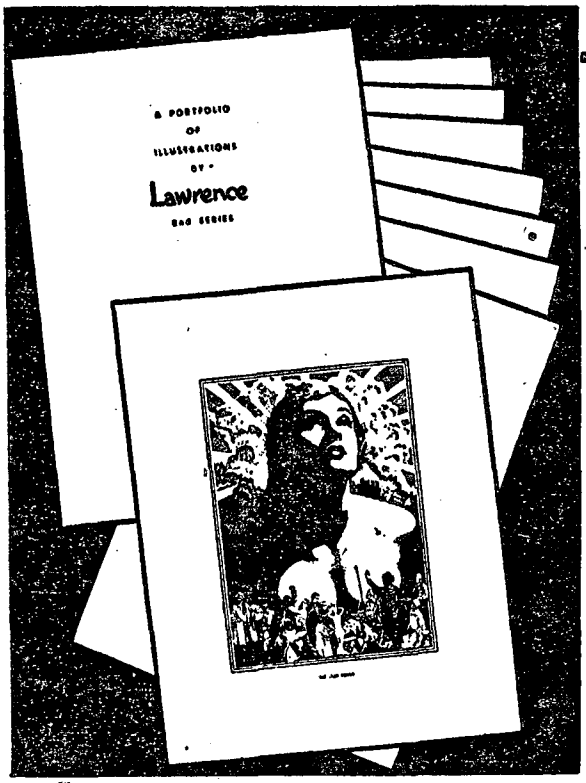

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(Continued from page 6)

pathos of "The Fall of the House of Usher." This was my introduction to Mr. Connington's work, but now that I have been initiated, I shall be expecting more novels of his. I didn't especially care for the illos for the story, however, with one exception, the one on page 95, which more than made up for the others. "Finlay forever—but Lawrence on covers!" Let this be the battle cry. Just a few reminders— Get Bok for covers (if only for one or two) more Taine (how 'bout "White Lily" or "Seeds of Life"? They have never appeared in book form).

Also wanted, "Heu-Heu or the Monster" by H. Rider Haggard.

The Voice from the Abyss,
BILL CALABRESE.

52 Pacific St.,
Stamford, Conn.

THE CONVENTION DATE!

Your readers will probably be interested in information regarding the Seventh World Annual Science Fiction Convention to be held in Cincinnati over the Labor Day week end, September 3-4-5, 1949.

The Cincinnati Fantasy Group, hosts, heartily welcomes all science fiction and fantasy fans to this event, and are hoping to make it an event worth attending.

Particulars may be had by writing Don Ford, 129 Maple Ave., Sharonville, Ohio.

"Don't miss it. Remember it!"

DALE TARR.

CONNINGTON EXCELLENT

I am writing this letter to you in a spirit of recantation. You see, "Nordenholt's Million" really is a deserving story. It is equal to and quite similar to the old classics formerly published in F.F.M. prior to the change-over to Popular and the newer type of story. The symbolic cover by Lawrence is one of his best to date. I assume the up-held hand signifies either the spirit of Mankind, indomitable, or else it is the closest view we got of Nordenholt, himself.

Finlay outdid himself not once, but twice, this time! The scene in the reading room is superb! Each of the readers is simply consumed by the thirst for knowledge! They say an empty stomach favors a sharp intellect. Joe Baker should be satisfied with the face on page 81. It should be equal to "Face in the Abyss".

Then on page 81 we have the best portrait by Finlay since the pre-war era. The seamy, fanatic face of the old woman is the other of the two best Finlay illustrations this issue. But what is lacking is a clear representation of Nordenholt. I think Frank R. Paul would have shown us Nordenholt, not once but at least three times. That is his manner. As an instance, take the Oct. 1942 issue containing "The Elixir of Hate" by George Allan England. A leading character, II Vechio, is seen in four different pictures.

Yes. I recant all I have said about F.F.M. in the past. I am sorry. All I can say is that I hope you keep up the standard reached with this Dec. number. I only wish two or more pages could be devoted to "Masters of Fantasy" each issue. And that the inside illustrations could be placed more closely to the text matter which they portray.

BOB BARNETT.

1107 Lyon,
Carthage, Mo.

NEIL AUSTIN WELL LIKED

It is getting to be a real pleasure to find F. F. M. printing such fine stories, lately. We have at last buried the horror type of story for a time at least. I won't complain, though.

"The Purple Sapphire" and "The Lion's Way" were both very good. I was glad to note that Darrell C. Richardson had lent you his copy of the latter. (He is the author of the Richardson Indexes which are now being published by the National Fantasy Fan Federation.)

I am pleased to note that Neil Austin is so well liked for his work on "Masters of Fantasy" in F.F.M., and I would like to suggest that F.F.M. save those plates for a reprint of the series, when they are at last completed. It would be nice to be able to get them all under one cover, some time in the future.

I hope all stf fans take advantage of your very generous offer of the Finlay Folio #3 for a sub to F.N., and a Lawrence Folio #2 for a sub to F.F.M. This is a real value, and it is sure to please all who like Finlay and Lawrence illustrations.

All stf fans who are interested in joining the largest group of stf fans in Fandom, please send me a card asking about NFFF details and information.

There is *no* other magazine that has such an informative Reader's column as F.F.M. (and F.N. is coming along fine).

K. MARTIN CARLSON—*Sec. NFFF.*

1028—3rd Ave. So.,
Moorhead, Minn.

DECEMBER ISSUE SATISFYING

This is another of those first letters to a magazine and has been put off several times. However, one must, at one time or another, write to such a consistently good magazine.

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First off, let's get into my gripes on your last two issues, which are happily few. My only kicks are directed at the short stories, "The Human Angle" of the October issue, and "Let Clarence Do It" in the latest. Neither was in the least interesting, particularly the former. Really, Ed, it is the only "bad" short you have given us in many months.

And now, let us bask in the brighter spots, pausing to praise that wondrous classic off C. T. Stoneham's pen, "The Lion's Way". A more fascinating story of dark jungles and mystery I have never read. It was wonderful. It is a tribute to the writer, in my opinion one of the best. The story was perfectly written and, in Stoneham's setting, Kaspa was a great character. Kaspa was a man who holds interest from the start, and at no point did the story drag, as do so many. Please, more like it.

As to the December issue, it was satisfying throughout. "Nordenholt's Million" was both good and well written, although not as much so as "The Lion's Way". It reminded me immensely of a couple of other stories I have read. These are "The Machine Stops" (F.F.M. March '45) and "The Second Deluge", in F.N. However, "Nordenholt's Million" is slightly different to both and quite as good as either. I don't believe I shall ever forget the exploits of Nordenholt. The story could have been better only if Nordenholt had not died when his work was finished.

I have classified all novels appearing in F.F.M. in the last year. I rank them thus: 1. "The Lion's Way". 2. "The Purple Sapphire" (My favorite Taine story). 3. "Nordenholt's Million". 4. "The Devil's Spoon". 5. "The Peacemaker". 6. "The City of the Dead" (please, no prolonged growls from the gallery).

Now, if this bit of mental effort should ever see print, I should like to plead with those of you who tightly clutch those duplicate copies, to please let go. I and others need them badly. I myself need all copies of 1940 and most of 1942. I have no books or magazines to trade, but will gladly pay a reasonable price for any with covers. All cards received making offers will be answered. (I really need April, 1946).

In building my collection of back issues, I cannot tell just how many issues I lack, due to irregular publication in 1941 and 1942. Please tell me how many issues were published in the years of '39, '40, '41, and '42. I can't seem to find out from anyone else.

Changes I would like to see made: Trimmed edges and monthly publication. As to changing F.F.M.'s name, I see no need, since the name does not effect the novel in the least.

Since everyone seems to have a want list of stories for future publication, here's mine: 1. "The Witch's Head", by H. Rider Haggard. 2. "Jewel of Seven Stars" by Bram Stoker. 3. "When Worlds Collide" by Wylie. 4. "Sirius" by Stapledon.

Fan-atically yours,
WILLIAM BERRY.

18 Sandusky Lane,
Alabama City, Ala.

Editor's Note: Write to Joseph B. Baker, P. O. Box 416, Chicago 90, Illinois, for information on back issues of F.F.M. and F.N.

EXCHANGE OFFER

I imagine that you have, at this time, received large numbers of letters from various fans commenting on your December choice, "Nordenholt's Million". There will, as usual, be quite a few who throw in the eternal complaint—"Another civilization-gone-to-the-dogs and resourceful-hero-saves-the-world hack job." There will probably be others of the "Oh-golly-gosh-gee-whiz-give-us-another" genre — that seemingly insatiable group of fans whose monthly quarters help support the tripewriter addict.

I have no blood feud with J. J. Connington. His plot is slightly worn, his characters, with the exception of Nordenholt, undistinguished. His writing at times shows a lilting cadence altogether unexpected and powerful. His description of London during Flint's visit is very good. The ending of the story is weak and prosaic.

The general effect of the story, in toto, is pretty good. It is not, however, on a plane with the stories you have published in the past and will, I hope, publish in the future. Authors such as Merritt, Wells, London, Chambers, Flint, Taine and a dozen more have produced Fantasy of a character that stands far above most of the "literature" of our current best-seller lists. There are dozens of titles as yet unpublished in magazine form that would be received with loud and joyous cries from every quarter of the Fantasy addicts' world. There are some other titles buried in the back files of *Argosy* that deserve to see the daylight once more. Please, no more stories of the world gone to pot and the saving thereof by a handsome young hero with a beautiful young thing on his arm.

The cover should have been left in the paint-pots of Mr. Lawrence. I cannot, offhand, recall a more undistinguished or puerile attempt to illustrate a story, at least not on F.F.M. Finlay was good, but I miss the inspired drawings with which he illustrated such stories as "Dwellers in the Mirage" or "Snake Mother". Again, *please*, put Finlay back on the covers.

In the event that any of the readers have surplus copies of F.F.M. which they would care to part with, I should be only too happy

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to oblige them. My collection now lacks about a dozen titles, and I would like to fill the gaps with very good to mint copies of old F.F.M. In exchange I could offer some extra copies of F.F.M., the old *Fantastic Novels, Unknown,* an old to very old *Astounding,* which I have accumulated. I would also like to receive any lists of books for sale or trade that might be floating around in the audience.

This letter begins to look like an accumulation of excerpts from every letter you have published in the past, so I might as well add the missing questions, threats, and pleas.

It is possible to have trimmed edges? Could you please add a couple of pages to the letter section? What about an Editors' Page or two, giving comments, answering pleas, and returning the threats? I'm all in favor of the comments on the individual letters as well. Keep up the good work.

I would like to see a few articles in F.F.M. and F.N. on Criticism of Fantasy. There are a number of excellent short commentaries in existence, but most of them are rare and very hard to find.

One last request before I go. Does anyone have copies of *Fantasy Commentator* that he would like to trade or sell?

T. P. CURRAN.

1005 East 60 St.,
Chicago 37, Ill.

READERS' VIEWPOINT FAN

Now, that's what I'd call a really good story! Of course I'm referring to the latest issue of F.F.M. and "Nordenholt's Million" by J. J. Connington. Not that it was a classic, you understand, only a few really great ones qualify for that category; but it was good.

You remember that one in F.N.? "The Second Deluge"? Well, you will, I'm sure, notice a similarity of plot. First comes the catastrophe, then the man who is to ward it off. Following there are, in both, several sub plots: the love stories, and Nordenholt's gradual physical and mental decline, the derision of the scientist in the "Deluge." This, of course, makes them widely different—apparently; but vitally, they are still the same.

Understand, now, I'm not complaining. I am only commenting on the various points of difference and sameness between the two tales. I think the widest difference is the fact that I didn't like "Second Deluge," and it bored me after the first couple of chapters. This didn't bore. Though essentially slow-moving, it conveyed vitality, and made one want to continue reading. And the doom, the suffering of the people outside the Nitrogen Area—that was handled and described especially beautifully. I could just see it.

And the Finlays! They were supernal; he is surely a master. Even Lawrence was doing work over his ability. The illo for the short was very good though not so well done as the other inside pics; but the cover! I place it, in my estimation, among the highest category, occupied by only a few choice artists, and among which, by the by, Finlay appears most often.

No, I have not neglected "Clarence." Not that it was as good as some you have printed; in fact two extra pages of The Readers' Viewpoint would have been welcome. Only ten letters! Why, fans have for centuries been begging for larger and better reader's pages. I would rather read more letters than an average short.

Returning to "Leave Clarence Do It"—oh, alright, *Let* him do it—, we find two pages of unnecessary verbiage. Since when is that famous? Please, please, make the shorts old too. Surely there must be some good old ones.

Ah! An epistle from Oliver. Now, this is what I mean; that letter—yes! that one letter!—was better reading than many a short story. If he would only write a story. . . .

And if you just could write a few sentences beneath the letters . . . just a few, to let us know that you read it, anyway. When we ask questions, you usually do not answer. In a previous ish, and in one of your few remonstrances, you told someone that you do not do this because the question has been asked and answered before. Now, not everyone must needs have seen this answer, as witness the repeated query itself; so why do you not repeat it for the luckless individual's benefit? It would not hurt to do this.

W. PAUL GANLEY.

119 Ward Road,
North Tonawanda, N. Y.

NEW SF TRADING POST

I would like to announce the fact that I have just completed the inauguration of the International Science-Fantasy Trading Post; a club that will be of help to STF fans and collectors who would like to get acquainted with others who have mutual interests. There are no monetary interests involved and the only stipulation is that members must be interested in trading and the exchanging of Science Fiction and Fantasy magazines and books, and above all, in swapping ideas and discussions on STF and Fantasy authors and stories.

This way, we hope to start a new kind of club to help people who, up until now, have not had the opportunity to exchange STF literature. So, I cordially invite all readers of Fantasy and STF to join and help us in forming the I.S.F.T.P.

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For swaps, we have now such books as: "The Purple Cloud" by M. P. Shiel; "The Mysteries of Paris" by Eugene Sue; "The Last Days of Hitler" by Trevor Roper; "Lady Into Fox" by David Garnett; "The Angelic Avengers" by Pierre Andrezel; "The Dawn Boy" and "The Day of the Brown Horde" by Richard Tooker; "Space Ship to Saturn" by Roy Rockwood; "The Dream" by H. G. Wells; "Right Off the Map", Autographed edition by C. E. Montague; "The Other Passenger and Others" by John Kier Cross; "Deluge" by S. Fowler Wright, and scores of other STF and Fantasy books for trade. Therefore, we invite all fans from the four corners of the Earth to write to us. Write to:

CALVIN THOMAS BECK.

271 Dartmouth St.
Boston 16, Mass.

APPRECIATION OF KASPA

It is inescapable that "The Lion's Way" will be compared with Burroughs' "Tarzan of the Apes." The most obvious point of similarity is that both Kaspa and Tarzan are reared from babyhood to teen-age juvenility by animals, Kaspa by a lion, Tarzan by an ape, both in an African jungle. There is also a resemblance in the method whereby they procure a knife and loin-cloth: each kills a native and, by experimenting, arrogates the articles to his own use. Kaspa feels no contrition or regret for killing the native, actually thinks very little about it, but Tarzan, if I recall correctly, feels that he has done something wrong by killing a creature shaped as he himself is. If I am in error about this, I'm certain someone will remind me of it. In the matter of education, there is a great gap between Kaspa's and Tarzan's progress. Tarzan's ability to decipher letters and words and finally to read books is more ingenious and fantastic than Kaspa's capacity, after months of being tutored by his friend Sefton, to effect the same things. The most notable difference between Kaspa's and Tarzan's life is that one (the former) goes himself to civilization and meets modern people, while Tarzan meets civilized people in his own precincts.

In regard to comparing "The Lion's Way" with "Tarzan of the Apes," I presume that the latter was published first, so that any resemblance would be accomplished by Stoneham, not Burroughs. Very probably the popularity of Tarzan inspired Kaspa. Burroughs has his limitations (as I have reminded several correspondents, when you have read one book about each of Burroughs' worlds, Pellucidar, Mars, Venus, etc., you have practically read them all) but "Tarzan of the Apes" is a better and more entertaining book that "The Lion's Way." I have one emendation to make in regard to that assertion: somehow, Stoneham's Africa seems more real than Burroughs'. I know that the location of a fantasy is unimportant, but the background for Tarzan is supposed to be authentic, which it has never seemed to me. Which makes me remember to mention that "The Lion's Way" is less fantastic than the Tarzan books. It has inconsistencies, but these are not fantasies.

Before I enumerate some of the incongruities, I wish to say the reader might have been spared that illustration on page 83, where open-jawed monstrosities hover over Lucian Marley with minatory violence. All the remaining illustrations are logical, excepting the one on page 39, where Kaspa, according to the text, is still a boy and, incidentally, learning to climb and swing in trees by observing the simian tree-dwellers: in the illustration, Kaspa is wearing a loin-cloth, which he does not get until later in his development.

One more comment on the art. On the cover, Kaspa is watching, with his arm around a lion, the wraith of a woman materialize from a fire. In the story, Kaspa never once had a fire. There was one place in the story where the author exhibited his more than ordinary knowledge of animals: that is where, beginning his battle with the new lion in the pack, Bulu, he is opposed by Kali, his animal-mother, who attempts to attack him in aid of her new mate. That was a poor sentence: I mean when Kaspa fought with the lion, not when the author did. The sentence which appeared to me unmatched as a clumsy one, was the following: "During the day Kaspa rested in the cave, but with the evening he arose and took his leave of his friends, promising to return within forty-eight hours at the most." I know this detail of the length of his absence is for the benefit of the reader, but it gives the ridiculous impression that the lions have their own clock, just like our own, with the usual hours marked out on it, which they comprehend.

A few more remarks about "The Lion's Way." The story was fine as long as Kaspa remained in the jungle. The moment he came out and began to come in conflict with the mannerisms and complexities of civilized society, the reader is wearied with the author's clichéd observations on the superiority of naive simplicity versus the sordid and disgusting paltriness of sophisticated living. Altogether, with its many defects, inartistic phraseology, and plot that sounded at times (as when Madeline, inadvertently coming on Kaspa in the woods away from Rosewood, asks him, after some converse, "And love?") like something from a booklet of plots, "The Lion's Way" is very readable. The description of Kaspa alone with the lions,

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in the beginning and for a while near the end, before the other characters seek him out, is equal to Burroughs. And the final chorus of the lions: "Trek, trek, brothers—Kaspa has gone from us again!" is one of the finest-sounding endings I have read in this sort of story in a long time.

Best recent novel in F.F.M. is John Taine's "The Purple Sapphire." This was quite atypical among the stories by authors I have never known about. I get as much pleasure learning what the next novel will be as I do reading the one in whatever issue I have.

Would a certain correspondent of mine in Pennsylvania let me know why he has not replied to my last letter?

Although I do not always like the stories and illustrations in F.F.M., I shall remain comparatively different, and not make suggestions for betterment. You and your staff do, as a whole, I am positive, the best work possible.

JOSEPH DE CELIS.

P. O. Box 194,
Gramercy, Louisiana.

A GREAT ISSUE

I received the October issue of F.F.M. a few weeks ago. As I passed the newsstand my x-ray eyes spotted the sunburst cover of my treasure. With a scream of glee I threw my denarius (quarter to you) into the clutching fists of the newsstand attendant and snatched the immortal magazine from the counter. Dashing out of the store I was suddenly confronted by a horrible fiend, who screamed, while trying to tear F.F.M. from my iron grasp, "I must have it! I must have it!" With a gleeful laugh I raised my hamlike fist and smashed his gibbering face to a red ruin. It seemed years before I reached my abode, the black, evil Yalnifligrio (spell it backwards) Castle, croutching like a monstrous black panther above the forboding waters of San Francisco Bay.

As I approached, the drawbridge slowly swung down over my crocodile infested moat. I dashed across it and it swung up again. After a hastily swallowed meal of hair, nail parrings and blood, I retired to my study with the treasure worth all the jewels of Kubla Khan, F.F.M. "Heh-heh. Ha-ha, hee-hee, ho-ho," I mouthed. "A Lawrence cover". I turned to the first story. One hour passed. Two hours. Three. Finally at the end of the fourth hour I read the final phrase. "Wonderful! Wonderful!" I screamed. C. T. Stoneham becomes one of my favorites. What's next?" I turned the page. "A Bradbury story! Three cheers and a cask of Amontillado!" My eyes drank the holy words in. "Wonderful!" I cried. "A great issue so far!" "The Human Angle" was the next story. "A Clyne illustration! Perfect!" I read with unholy glee. "Ha-ha!" I cried. "I had a premonition she was going to be a vampire! Great story! By the way," I reminded myself, "I hope they have a Masters of Fantasy in this issue." I turned the page. "Edgar Rice Burroughs! The Devil be praised!" I again (very gently) turned the page. It only took me a few minutes to finish. "That Low"— I murmured, "The perfect issue," and sank back into my mouldy coffin. Awful tripe, you'll say. I thought so too.

Seriously though, the October F.F.M. was just about the perfect issue. Good stories, good illustrations, good everything. At the beginning of "The Lion's Way," I thought it was going to be a perfect duplicate of "The Jungle Book." It really surprised me. All readers please observe this. I have decided to take a poll among the readers of F.F.M. All readers please drop me a line. Just write either "good" or "bad" about the following features of F.F.M. and, if you want, give a reason for your choices. 1. Long stories. 2. Short stories. 3. Artwork. 4. Readers' Dept. 5. Choice of authors. After doing this, give one or two suggestions as to how the magazine can be improved. As soon as I tally up the totals, I'll send them in to F.F.M.

By the way, if anyone is interested, I'll trade the following books for a copy of either "Marginalia" by H. P. Lovecraft or "Lost Worlds" by Clark Ashton Smith. I won't accept a book unless it is in good condition with dust wrapper. The books are "The Croquet Player" by H. G. Wells with dust wrapper. "Speak of the Devil" by Sterling North and C. B. Boutell, and (get this) a first edition of "The Witch of Prague" by F. Marion Crawford. This book was published in 1891 and is in wonderful condition for such an old book. It has 45 beautiful illustrations by W. J. Hennessey.

Yours FANtastically,
BENNIE "DRACULA" JACOPETTI.

1892 Green St.,
San Francisco, Calif.

DELIGHTFUL ESCAPE READING

F.F.M. has certainly improved in recent issues. Congratulations!

Let's hope there'll be no more slips like "Unthinkable" and "City of the Dead."

"Devil's Spoon" was great. "Purple Sapphire" was very good too. Keep Taine and Haggard coming at us. 'Nordenholt's Million" looks fine, too. I see the blurb says "The Strangest Story Ever Told." That's all very well but if I remember rightly you said the same thing about "City of the Dead." And I certainly don't think anyone would agree after reading the story.

Finlay is better in December. Maybe it was the reproduction process that made his pictures

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so black. In any event, I still think Lawrence is every bit his equal, if not superior.

Mainly, tho', I want to rave about "The Lion's Way" this time. Of course it's just Tarzan all over again, but with a few new twists. The lion lore for instance, was very interesting. Stoneham writes a good adventure tale, just fantastic enough. It was delightful escape reading. I'd like to read the sequel, "Kaspa of the Lions." It would be interesting to see if a man like that could really be happy in just one of his two worlds.

Just one complaint. The blurbs about the stories don't really tell what they're about and are often misleading. Take "Lion's Way." Kaspa wasn't an outcast really from either group. He didn't really wage a love battle. It just doesn't fit. How about more careful descriptions?

The readers' columns are still full of fine suggestions for stories. Sorry you cut down the readers' column in the December issue. It's one of the best parts of the magazine.

DONALD V. ALLGEIER.

1857 Gerrard Ave.,
Columbus 12, Ohio.

BRADBURY'S STYLE UNUSUAL

On going over the contents page of the Oct. issue I was greatly interested to find, listed thereon, the name William Tenn. This interest of mine in a comparatively little-known writer stems from the appearance in *Life* magazine, some time ago, of an article on Tennessee Williams, the playwright. In the article it was revealed that Mr. Williams had one or more stories published in the old *Weird Tales*.

Naturally, on reading this, my curiosity was aroused, and I began searching through an index of past issues of W.T. in an effort to discover some clue that would identify him. (I no longer have that particular copy of *Life* but I assume, of course, that the story, or stories, were presented under a pseudonym.)

After a time of running the gauntlet of the great and near-great of fantasy fiction, I came across one name that stood out like the proverbial sore thumb. Of course, that name was William Tenn.

All this probably doesn't mean a thing—I wouldn't want to go out on a limb and say that Tennessee Williams and William Tenn are the same man—but you must admit it's an interesting possibility. . . .

Briefly, a review of the present issue:

"The Women" is an extremely well written tale by a writer who has come to be regarded, and justly so, as one of the best in the business. Bradbury's style is the most unusual and distinctive in the field. His stories are unique.

Theodore Sturgeon's batting average is "That Low."

It was apparent from the start that "The Human Angle" could end in but one way, and it did, thus robbing itself of its most vital element—suspense, and its interest for yours truly. Have read only a few pages of "The Lion's Way," so can offer no comment. Finlay's illustrations for this story are the best he's done (in F.F.M.) in a long while. The drawing for "The Women" is also first-rate, reminiscent of his work on Francis Stevens' "Claimed," way back in '41. Lawrence and Clyne were both satisfactory.

Am in the market for a good, clean copy of the Feb. '47 F.F.M. Mine, somehow or other, managed to get itself lost from my collection.

JAMES ELLIS.

604 10th St., S. W.,
Washington 4, D. C.

TAINE ADMIRER

As I had hoped and expected, "The Purple Sapphire" was a good story. It deserved publishing, as did the other three Taine novels that have appeared in F.F.M.

The cover was really good work and Lawrence deserves orchids. Finlay's work inside seems to suffer from an excess of ink, but is otherwise all right. But not anywhere near his work in F.N. of late.

Leinster's story would have been appreciated much more if some of the other hundred such stories hadn't already appeared. As it was, it was enjoyable enough. But I was somewhat disappointed to find the atomic-war theme in F.F.M. too. I believe that the illustration for the story is the first work by Leydenfrost to appear in F.F.M.

Though I've said practically nothing about the novel, believe me, it was appreciated. Taine's descriptive power equals Merritt's although in a very different way. Some might find this reading a bit tedious, but if they read without skipping a word, it all makes for very good reading. Taine knows how to put words together!

Masters of Fantasy is as usual a worthy feature.

Now let us look back over the last year or so. We'll start at the beginning of 1947. We shall see how the novels went. Or rather, see how many you've given us that we had asked for.

Out of the eleven novels (counting the October F.F.M. of this year) printed, only two had been requested to any extent by the readers. These two being the Haggard novel and Taine's. Of the rest, most of us who are not book collectors or who are well versed in fantasy book lore, had never heard of them before. Maybe some were fairly familiar but most weren't. And, this being the important thing, most of

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these other nine novels were boring and of little fantasy content. There were some exceptions such as the well accepted "Devil's Spoon," but most of them weren't very satisfactory.

But what of the many, many requests being made for certain novels? I've made a list of most-asked-for novels ever since the policy change back in 1943. Few have been published. I'd like to know why and which aren't suitable. Surely, most every one else would too!

Hodgson's "The Night Land" and "House on the Borderland" are two way up on the want list. Taine's "The Gold Tooth" is a really wanted story, judging from the number of requests. More much wanted stories are: "Last and First Men," "The Starmaker" by Stapledon; "Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" by Lovecraft; "Green Fire" by Taine; "She" and "Ayesha" by Haggard and "Great God Pan" by Machen. There are many, many others that are always being asked for of late. Such as Chambers' "Slayer of Souls." Why can't you publish a list of stories that have been asked for repeatedly and let us vote on the ones that we want most?

You could then let us know which ones you think stand a chance of being published and also publish a list of novels that definitely are unsuitable. I think that would only be fair. Especially if we readers would all co-operate. After all, when a story has been judged unsuitable for F.F.M., how are we to know? We just keep on asking, all the time not knowing that we are wasting our time!

Ed. Cox.

4 Spring St.,
Lubec, Maine.

LIKED "PURPLE SAPPHIRE"

I'm not funny like some of those other guys that write in, but I like to express my opinion. Enclosed you will (I hope) find three ($3) dollars, for one year's subscription to your two fine fantasy mags, F.F.M. and F.N. starting with the October issue of F.F.M.

As for the stories, you can print anything you want and I will read it, but I particularly liked "Purple Sapphire." I, having read fantasy for only a year (and only your mags) am not capable of expressing an opinion on the great Merritt, but the "Moon Pool" stories seemed a little too descriptive but otherwise excellent.

Maybe you're getting tired of too many orchids (ha, ha) but I admire your letter section very much, I always read that first of all and I'd like to chime in and say I'd like for you to reply to every letter. That would be the final touch.

Tommy Sanders.

908 Herman St.,
Tell City, Ind.

ILLUSTRATIONS PERFECT

Everyone wants to get into the act. May I add my two cents worth?

I just finished "Nordenholt's Million" and this is what prompted me to write to F.F.M. I might add that this is my first letter to any magazine. Without a doubt I can honestly say in my few years of reading your magazine, "Nordenholt's Million" was the best, although "The Lion's Way" ran a very close second.

Illustrations were perfect and those done by Finlay on pages 31, 47 and 95 are especially excellent.

Compared with some of the older readers of fantasy, I cannot add what you should print. My only request for improvement is to go monthly.

George Holmes.

69-10 58th Ave.,
Maspeth, L. I., N. Y.

P. S.—I need old S.F. and *Weird Tales* magazines. Anyone who has any for sale and doesn't request my blood, please contact me.

REQUEST FOR HELP

This is the first time I have ever written to any magazine. but after reading Cordell Mahaney's letter in April F.F.M., I am tempted to take up my pen and plead.

I say plead, because he mentioned Wayland Smith's "The Machine Stops"—a story I have been after for years. I wonder whether any of your readers could sell, lend or supply me with the magazine in which this story appeared.

Now to criticize. I have just finished March F.N. and April F.F.M. This was the first F.N. I had ever read although I've read and enjoyed quite a few F.F.M.'s. "Ship of Ishtar" was superb. I am now a Merritt fan for life. "The Middle Bedroom" didn't even rate. What corn! As for April F.F.M., well! There's nothing to criticize because it was my idea of a perfect magazine.

Well; I have placed an order with our local news agent for F.F.M. and F.N. which assures me many months of enjoyable reading.

J. Seigal.

167 Cason Quarters,
Boksburg North,
Transvaal, South Africa.

HIS FAVORITE TALE

About the only thing I like in "Nordenholt's Million" is its final touch of optimism. My favourite tale among those published recently in F.F.M. is "The Lion's Way."

Merritt's books do not seem to be as common as many of your readers have stated. Therefore, your publication of his stories has

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my approval. Acquired his "The Metal Monster" and "Creep, Shadow!" in pocketbook edition yesterday, which are the only Merritt books I've seen for a couple months. They are in excellent condition and I offer them for sale or trade.

Have a good copy of Jack London's "Before Adam" which I offer in exchange for some book by Robert W. Chambers that I do not have. Also have duplicate copies of F.F.Ms (from Oct. '46 to date) and F.N.s (from May '48 to date) which I am offering for sale or trade.

Yes, I too should like to see a story by Burroughs published in F.F.M. Such as his "Beyond Thirty."

GORDAN STOECKLER.

3420 23rd, S. E.,
Washington, D. C.

FINLAY FAN #1

Thanks a million for publishing my letter in F.N. Vol. 1, No. 6.

The 20 copies of F.N. that I purchased of that issue have been sent to fans all over the country that missed the issue.

I now have on hand 6 purchased copies of F.F.M. Oct. 1948 containing "The Lion's Way" by C. T. Stoneham. These I will send free postpaid to the first six persons whom, being new readers of F.F.M. or F.N., need this issue. I also have many other copies of Fantasy magazines and I will send one each postpaid to anyone writing to me, that is until I run out of magazines.

I have about 150 magazines, so come on, fellas and gals.

Paul Cox mentioned in his fine Fanzine that I was a philanthropist—but—I figure this way. Fantasy is a fine reading hobby. And it gives me a great feeling to pass it on to others. By the way, I have several hundred books of Fantasy to trade or sell. Anyone of these are dirt cheap to fantasy fans.

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Finlay Fan No. 1,

JACK ROBERTS.

69 Erie St.,
Tiffin, Ohio.

P.S.—I am "Tifantasy" and hope to meet by mail or otherwise hundreds of Fantasy Fans.

FOR THE FUTURE

Regarding the latest issues of F.F.M. without favor, I was pleased when "Lion's Way" hit the mail stop out our way. I was still languishing over the ill-effects of "City of the Dead" and Stoneham was certainly a welcome relief.

Lawrence cover: nice, and symbolical, *n'est-ce pas?* As much as I prefer Finlay, I would rather have a subdued Lawrence cover like this one than the Finlay for "Devil's Spoon." Another thing which I like about F.F.M. is your title of the novel—placed in the upper left and not interfering with the depicted scene. About the only fantasy magazine I've seen that does this.

That contents page! Bradbury, Tenn, and Sturgeon. Gads, what a treat. Tenn's vampire short is the type of fantasy I like to read. Could we have some of the novelets from "Tales of the Undead"?

ERB in the Masters of Fantasy ought to satisfy the Burroughs fans. I, too, would like to see some of his lesser known works in F.F.M. "Outlaw of Torn" or "Moon Maid" are 2 examples. I understand that the latter is considered one of the classics of science fiction and fantasy. Austin's drawing was passable.

Interiors were again passable. Finlay has deserted bubbles for straight line drawings. The Finlay for the Bradburyarn was the only one up to his old style.

For the future:

1. More vampire stories. "White Wolf" by Franklin Gregory fits in here nicely.
2. A Wheatley story. "60 Days to Live" is my favorite Wheatley fantasy.
3. More pics like the Leydenfrost for Leinster's short in the August ish.
4. Return of Finlay to bubbles.
5. A novel length of science-fiction. Now that A. E. van Vogt is appearing throughout the field, his works in F.F.M. would be perfectly fine.

Good wishes to F.F.M.

STEWART METCHETTE.

3551 King St.,
Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

LIKED TAINE OFFERING

John Taine's "The Purple Sapphire" was terrific. This is the best story I've read for a long time.

The short in the August issue by Leinster was fair. I just got the October issue the other day. I haven't read the novel yet, but the three short stories were very poor. Bradbury's wasn't too bad. How about a fantasy by L. R. Hubbard? "Death's Deputy" and "Slaves of Sleep" are two of his best. I'd also like to see "Ralph 124C4lt" get published. *Fantastic Novels* is great.

Your faithful reader,

RICHARD ELSBERRY.

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NOTICE TO COLLECTORS

Noticing the desire of many readers to fill in their collections I take this means of announcing my intention of disposing of quite a large number of back issues, magazines and books. Books include such items as "Planet of Peril," "Maza of the Moon," "Lost Continent," "Coming of the Amazons," and many others. Any fan interested may contact me either to buy or trade. Have you considered "Symthe," "The Gilded Man," and Doyle's "Maracot Deep," as possibilities?

L. L. GREEN.

5217 Langley Ave.,
Affton 23, Mo.

WANT BACK ISSUE?

I have been reading your magazine and all other S.F. and Fantastic magazines for about twenty years. Like most of them, but am getting a little tired of civilizations ending and being built up again, usually in England. However. I still read them all and wish you went to press oftener.

I have a couple hundred issues of all S. F. and Fantastic magazines. I would like to dispose of same if anyone would care to contact me.

Yours in Fantasy,

J. GUDALEFSKY.

3248 N. Broad St.,
Philadelphia, Pa.

WANTS MORE LEYDENFROST

Regarding the stories run in F.F.M. and F.N., my opinion is that the last top-flight stories were "Minimum Man" and "The Second Deluge." Of course in F.N. it's been almost exclusively Merritt, so far—and I'd read them all before—including the next, "Seven Footprints, etc." But in F.F.M. you've been reaching pretty far back, for some pretty poor stuff, while passing up many which have had a pretty solid fan vote. It's possible, of course, that with many of them you have trouble securing printing rights. Anyway, though I may never read the story,

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I'll buy, as long as you keep Lawrence's art. I may have mentioned in previous letters that I consider Finlay a poor second to Lawrence. Well—each succeeding job by Lawrence widens the gap. While on the subject of illustrations, too, let me add my vote for more, much more, Leydenfrost.

I wonder if any of your readers would happen to have a copy of a book called "Marching Sands," by Harold Lamb—or another, "Song of the Falcon" or some such thing, by the same author, and if so, would they be willing to part with same? I have quite a collection of F.F.M.'s and F.N.'s—almost a complete one, in fact, with just a couple of Radio issues (Farley stories) missing. I'll part with any but "The Blind Spot" and "Spot of Life." So, anyone having copies of the books named—can we arrange a trade? My magazines are in very good shape, except for some missing covers.

GEORGE EVANS.

193 Prospect Ave.,
N. Arlington, N. J.

"A VAGUE ABSTRACTION"

It was inevitable, of course. But I was hoping it wouldn't happen for some time. Since you average, I should say, about 2.476 stories to the issue, it was, as I said, inevitable.

I mean that it was inevitable that you should eventually publish an issue without a single good story in it.

You've done it, you've did it, you've dood it.

When you dood it, you get a verbal licking, and let me be among the first to administer it.

First, there was the short story. The doctor was a cardboard figure, but that was to be expected. The other was simply a convenient question-asker for the main part of the story, and, in the last paragraph, provided the "surprise." This particular surprise-ending, having been used at least 1,000 times, can hardly be called new. That doesn't matter. What does matter is that it was used in your magazine exactly *one* issue ago. You might at least vary your tired plots.

Then came the novel. I think back among the end-of-civilization stories you've published. "The Machine Stops" was better! "The Twenty-Fifth Hour" was tremendously better! "Unthinkable" was better! *Even "The People of the Ruins" was better!*

Nordenholt was a vague abstraction. He talks vaguely of the Struggle, the Fight, the Survival of the Fittest, the Supreme Morality, of Circumstance, and all the other little etceteras, yet he brings his niece up so strictly that she is shocked by the true purpose of the Nitrogen

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Area, and makes what is virtually a suicide attempt to escape her self-created horror. We are assured by the narrator that he is cold and hard, yet he drips sentimentality. The minor characters are indistinguishable one from another, and the major characters are cardboard figures with one trait only of character. Only the scenes with Wotherspoon and those in London after the Blight are even interesting, and, occupying only .1 of the story, they are both obviously copied from "The Hopkins Manuscript."

Incidentally, why don't you print "The Hopkins Mss."?

Why don't you print something by Machen, or "The Repairer of Reputations," "When William Came," "The World Below," "The Gods of Pegana," "Dream," "Deluge," "Time and the Gods," or "Dawn"?

MICHAEL WIGODSKY.
7744 Ridgeland Ave.,
Chicago 49, Ill.

FINLAY PICS GOOD

I have finished "Nordenholt's Million" and was rather disappointed in the last half of the story. The story started out well but that's about all. The short was short and that's about all.

Lawrence was far below par in this issue, but Finlay made up for it with his wonderful interior pictures.

Why not print another story like the "Lion's Way?" Perhaps something by E. R. Burroughs. Maybe one of his rare yarns. And I think your readers would like something by Kline.

Any fans having old F.F.M. for trade or would like to correspond, please let me know.

PAUL MOORE.
2266 Benson Dr.,
Dayton 6, Ohio.

ITEM REQUESTED

I have just devoured your December issue of F.F.M. and now am going to get a good dose of Pepto-Bizmal to help digest it.

Connington's yarn was only passably good. As for the short story, the less said about it, the better.

I see in your next issue you have one of Jack London's best fantasies, "The Scarlet Plague." I've never heard of your other story but I hope it isn't a world destruction item.

Would like to see some of the following stories in the future. "Colin" and its sequel "Colin II," by E. F. Benson; "Tree of Heaven," by Robert W. Chambers; "The Lost World," by A. Conan Doyle; "Hill of Dreams," by Arthur Machen;

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"Tower of Oblivion," by Oliver Onions; "Man From Limbo," by Guy Endore; "Children of the Morning," by W. L. George; "Land Under England," by Joseuh O'Neil; "Mysterious Stranger," by Mark Twain; "Day of Uniting," by Edgar Wallace.

While in England I ran across a rare little volume called "Living Death," by Richard Fleming. I bought it, but later lost it. If any readers have a copy please write me.

A faithful reader,
ROY HALE.

Box 69,
St. Paul, Minn.

ON F.F.M. IN GENERAL

Since 1949 marks the tenth year of F.F.M., I suppose we fans are due for a special treat.

Please, please bring back the editor's page. I considered it an integral part of the old F.F.M.

Don't care much for your selections of the Feb. 1949 issue. However you have given us a lot of good stories in 1948 so I guess 1949 will bring a bigger and better F.F.M.

We need more variety in F.F.M., too much lost race, cave man, and end of the world stuff lately. Blackwood, Dunsany, Stapledon, and Machen would be appreciated.

Fantastic Novels is really hitting on all cylinders and why wouldn't it? Look at all the Munsey material it can draw on.

Best of luck,
ED WOOD.

31 N. Aberdeen St.,
Chicago, Ill.

SELDOM DISAPPOINTED IN F.F.M.

Thank you for many wonderful hours of entertainment. Have been reading F.F.M. for years and have very seldom been disappointed in your selections. When are you going to give us some of Van Vogt? His Slan is out of print, and I am sure would be really appreciated by your readers.

I have some F.F.M. issues that I am willing to part with; a complete file for the years '47 and '48. Also, some odd issues; the Ancient Allan, Dec. '45; Apr., June, Oct., and Dec. for the year '46.

G. Y. SNYDER.

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FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES

The October issue of F.F.M. was terrific—sensational that is. "The Lion's Way," by Stoneham rated 1-A with me. Are there any more Kaspa stories around? Please publish them if so. And the short stories were excellent, too. "The Human Angle"—all I can say is "What an angle!" Keep it up. Last, but not least (next to the usually good reader's section) we find a slightly out-of-this world cover by Lawrence, who, in my opinion beats every other artist in the business.

Now, for some short chatter. I come from Guatemala, Central America, and am up here for college. Last summer when I went home I took your magazine with me and showed it around. Of course, everybody liked it (except natives, who can only speak Spanish). I haven't seen F.F.M. back home. Don't you circulate it down there? All other S.F. are circulated there, why not yours? Anyway, for one favor I expect a returned favor. That favor is—and I beg this of you on bended knees, please, pretty please, publish some Burroughs!! Every time some reader brings this up, you discard it. But, please—publish some of his old unpublished-in-book form Tarzan stories. Also his Carter of Mars stories and any Burroughs, for that matter. One of your readers mentioned the fact that most Burroughs stories can be had today—that's true; but what about those that can't be had, huh?? Think it over.

And, oh yes, even though I liked it immensely, don't you think Kaspa is a copy of Tarzan?

Best of luck to you. Keep up the good work. Sincerely and *que le vaya muy bien.*

KEN ROSENTHAL.
862 Sumner Ave.,
Syracuse, N. Y.

LAWRENCE COVERS BEAUTIFUL

About six months ago I threw brickbats at the late Arthur Machen, but now after reading the "Great God Pan," I take back everything, it seems I've made a great mistake in saying Machen was dull. "The Great God Pan" has given me a new insight on the rest of his stories. I thought "The Novel of the Black Seal" and the rest of his stories were dull, but I see quite clearly Machen's folklore demonology is unique, rivaling that of the great Lovecraft. Writing to F.F.M. someone said Finlay's drawing of "People of the Ruins" looks like Freddie March and Norma Shearer on which I agree. Does not the March cover of F.F.N. look like Tony Martin and Jinx Falkenberg? It seems as if Lawrence draws inspiration from Hollywood also.

The cover is very beautiful as are all the Lawrence covers. I've never written about Lawrence, but his covers are really beautiful. It

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seems, though, you're not using Paul enough. He's tops when it comes to scenes with people in them. For weird or horror tales I think Bok is the one who can best illustrate them. Of the last four F.F.M. I rate "The Messenger" excellent, "The Human Angle" good and the remainder fair and poor.

Here is my primary peeve. In the last two years we've been getting too many stories in which the earth or most of it is being destroyed in some way or the other. The December issue, "Nordenholt's Million" is a horrible example. I don't think you read these stories, or so it seems. You waste half of what may be a good story in technical terms or in numbers so vast that ordinary people like myself find them incomprehensible. "The Second Deluge" was as bad if not worse. I read an article where science claims the human brain cannot conceive a number greater than 2. In "Nordenholt's Million" we are plagued with numbers innumerable. Getting back to these cataclysms which take place in the pages of F.F.M. Cannot you conceive of the earth's destruction in a more plausible manner? If these catastrophes must take place, try making them like the July issue of F.N., Frank Pollock's "Finis" or "Darkness and Dawn," by George Allan England. I would always like to see some survivors build a new world, but please no discourses on these technicalities which ruin a story, and please no numbers.

The reason I am against this is the authors seem to let the story get away from them, they don't seem to be able to handle them. Connington in "Nordenholt's Million" sounded very discouraged, but not so much as myself. It was a gruelling task reading N. M., but I struggled through it. I'm easy to please as are most people.

Of all the F.F.M. and F.N. I've only missed about five magazines. I started reading F.F.M. in 1939 when I was 22 years of age. Volume 1 No. 1 was Sept. Oct 1939 had these stories "The Moon Pool," Merritt; "The Whimpus," Robbins; "Space Station No. 1," Wellman; "Witchmakers," Wandrei; "Karpen the Jew," Leath; "Blind Man's Buff," Giesy, and "The Girl in the Golden Atom," by Ray Cummings.

You see, I have read them all and have saved them. I treasure them highly. How about smooth edges on F.F.M.? I like your magazines and always will. Nor will I ever miss one, but when it comes to complaining I could go on indefinitely. I'll close now and hope something better will come up soon.

ANGELO NAVAGATO.

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FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES OFFERS H.R.H. BOOKS

Not only the editor, but all ye Haggard followers, fans, fiends, etc.—how oft, in this sanctum of the reader and his opinions, have I noted requests for the tomes of H. Rider Haggard? This isn't a request for 'em, but an opportunity for someone to gather up twenty Haggards — "Montezuma's Daughter," "Margaret," "Allan Quatermain," "Nada, the Lily," "She," "Jess," "Lysbeth," "Elissa & Black Heart and White Heart," "Pearl Maiden," "People of the Mist," "Cleopatra," "Eric Brighteyes," "Morning Star," "Swallow," "Spirit of Bambatse," "King Solomon's Mines," "Heart of the World," "The Wanderer's Necklace," "Mameena, Child of Storm," and "Marie." They're all in the one set and bound identically.

This reader can't comment much on the recent issues of F.F.M., mainly because they haven't been read, as yet. When the winter evenings roll around, though, they'll roll out the carpets of fantasy for a lot of enjoyable hours.

Everyone seems to request certain stories, so may I throw in one or two at this point? There's a little job called "Her Last Lover" (author unknown at the moment) that's a beaut.

Haggard's "She" is so quite well-known, but the other two of the trilogy don't have the same fame, so why not "Wisdom's Daughter" (Ayesha and the original Kallikrates) or the final one of "Ayesha"? And then there's one called "Passenger to Bali."

For the benefit of those who seek Haggard's works, I hope this sees print. It's a pleasure to see such a reawakening to H. R. H., and I've yet to read an uninteresting one, even when they were being ground out. Letters are welcome.

ED NOBLE, JR.

Girard, Pa.

THREE GOOD SHORTS

The October issue just arrived, and Yours Truly polished it off in one sitting. I could not get violently interested in "The Lion's Way," by Mr. Stoneham, though it was undeniably well-written. The three shorts, however, rang all kinds and shades of bells with me. "The Women," by Ray Bradbury, did not end as well as it might have, but Bradbury is infallible and the idea behind his little gem was out of this world. William Tenn can write! I could see that little kid vampire, in "The Human Angle," as plainly as if she had been sitting by *me* and biting *my* neck. Theodore Sturgeon is another who seldom slips up on a story. "That Low," while very good, was below his standard, though.

The other day, it occurred to me that "The Maker of Shadows," by Jack Mann, which appeared in the December 1939 issues of *Argosy*, would make a good choice for F.N.

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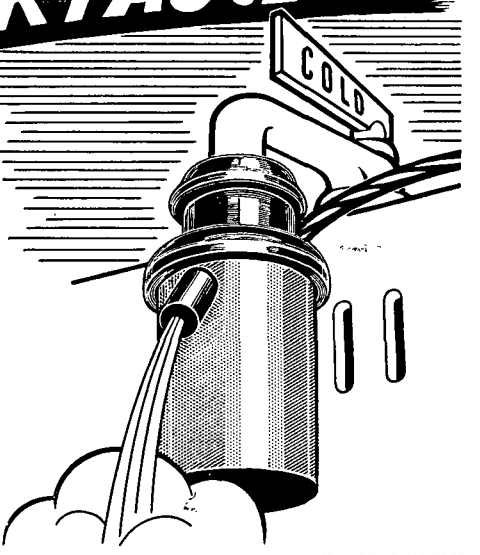

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